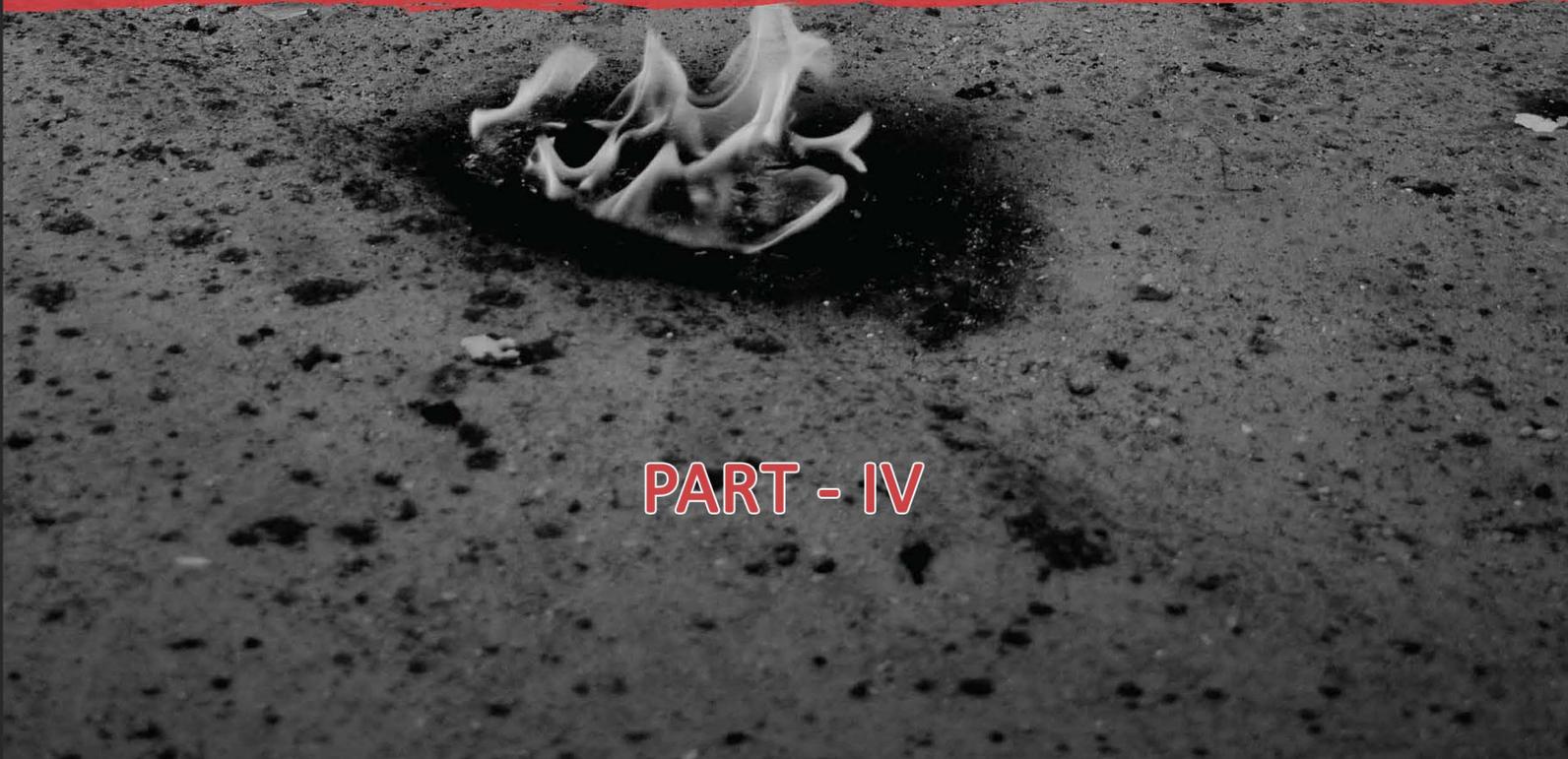


PEOPLE'S INQUEST INTO THOOTHUKUDI POLICE FIRING - JUNE 2018



the day
Tuticorin
burned



PART - IV

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16-yr-old girl among 9 killed in anti-Sterlite protest in Tamil Nadu

DECCAN CHRONICLE

Published May 22, 2018, 3:22 pm IST

Updated May 22, 2018, 5:01 pm IST

Police said section 144 of CrPc has been invoked in and around the Sterlite unit to provide security as per Madras HC orders.

Angered over not being allowed to take out a rally the slogan-shouting protesters forcibly tried to push back the security personnel in riot gear. (Photo: ANI screengrab)

Tuticorin: At least 9 people, including a 16-year-old girl died when the month-long protest in Tamil Nadu's where agitators are demanding closure of Vedanta's Sterlite Copper unit took a violent turn on Tuesday.

All the eight bodies of have been taken to Thoothukudi government medical college and hospital.

The agitators pelted stones and damaged police vehicles after they were prevented

from marching towards the plant. Police barged into a hospital where some of the youth took refuge after hurling stones at the police. However, they escaped by scaling the backside wall.

Police said section 144 of CrPc has been invoked in and around the Sterlite unit to provide security to it as per the orders of the Madras High Court.

Angered over not being allowed to take out a rally the slogan-shouting protesters forcibly tried to push back the security personnel in riot gear.

In retaliation, the security personnel lobbed teargas shells to disperse the protesters.

Several vehicles were also set ablaze further escalating tension in the area.

Meanwhile, a peaceful demonstration was held near the old bus stand in the town, also demanding the closure of the

Sterlite unit and the proposed expansion of the plant.

Several shops in this town, Srivaikundam and Oddapidaram remained shut in support of the protest, police said.

The district has been witnessing several protests by locals and others against the Sterlite Copper plant here and its proposed expansion.

Protesters have alleged that the plant was polluting ground water in their area.

Sterlite Copper represents the copper unit of Vedanta Limited which operates a 400,000 tonnes per annum-plant in Tuticorin.

NATIONAL

Protesters vent fury on Collectorate

J. Praveen Paul Joseph

THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 23, 2018 00:00 IST

The Thoothukudi Collectorate became the object of fury of the anti-Sterlite protesters on Tuesday.

The violence snowballed when the protesters entered the Collectorate after clearing barricades and pelted stones causing damage to window panes of office buildings.

They torched many vehicles parked on the Collectorate premises and other places.

The scene resembled a war zone in hours as about 50 two-wheelers, six government vehicles and two cars were damaged or torched by the protesters inside the Collectorate.

Officials evacuated

Smoke emanating from the Collectorate, which stood deserted, could be seen even from a distance. Almost all officials were evacuated to safer places.

Senior police officials are monitoring the situation, which was brought under control in the afternoon.

State-sponsored terror: Rahul; Stalin calls it shameful incident

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, MAY 23, 2018 00:00 IST

Congress president Rahul Gandhi, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam working president M.K. Stalin and other Opposition parties strongly condemned the police firing in Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu on Tuesday.

“The gunning down by the police of 9 people in the #SterliteProtest in Tamil Nadu, is a brutal example of state-sponsored terrorism. These citizens were murdered for protesting against injustice. My thoughts & prayers are with the families of these martyrs and the injured,” Mr. Gandhi tweeted.

In Tamil Nadu, Opposition leaders unanimously demanded the closure of the Sterlite copper unit.

Mr. Stalin met Tamil Nadu Chief Secretary Girija Vaidyanathan at the Secretariat and demanded a judicial inquiry into the firing. He cancelled his trip to Bengaluru to participate in the swearing-in of Janata Dal(S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy as Chief Minister on Wednesday. Instead, he will visit Thoothukudi.

Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit said his heart was filled with grief on knowing about the loss of lives in Thoothukudi. “I appeal to all sections of society to be calm and help in maintaining peace in the State,” he said.

BJP national secretary H. Raja, however, justified the police firing. Responding to a tweet by CPI(M) leader T.K. Rangarajan, Mr. Raja said there was no other way (for the police) when protests turned violent.

Sterlite Copper in a statement said: “It is with great sorrow we witnessed today’s incidents...The company has appealed to the government...to ensure the safety of our employees...The Sterlite Copper plant is currently non-operational as we await approval for the consent to operate.”

Police fired under unavoidable circumstances: T.N. CM



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, MAY 23, 2018 00:00 IST

Orders setting up of a one-member commission of inquiry, announces solatium of Rs. 10 lakh to the family of each of the victims

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Tuesday ordered the setting up of a one-member commission of inquiry into the firing against anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi.

Announcing this, Fisheries Minister D. Jayakumar told presspersons at the Secretariat on Tuesday evening that the panel would go into all issues that led to the firing. He was responding to the question who had ordered the firing. The government is yet to name the Inquiry Commissioner.

Earlier in a statement, the Chief Minister said a solatium of Rs. 10 lakh would be paid to the family of each of the dead; Rs. 3 lakh to each of those who suffered major injuries; and Rs. 1 lakh to each with minor injuries. “Besides,

on compassionate grounds, government employment would be provided to one member of the family of every deceased subject to qualifications,” Mr. Palaniswami said.

Condoling the deaths, he directed the Thoothukudi district administration and doctors to ensure that the injured be provided quality treatment.

Seeking to justify the police action of firing at a “20,000-strong crowd who indulged in violence”, the Chief Minister said: “It was with a view to bringing under control the violence of the crowd that the police, under unavoidable circumstances, had to resort to the firing.”

Vehicles set afire

Defying prohibitory orders and ignoring the police advice to disperse, the crowd had not only thrown stones at the police but also burnt down police vehicles. In addition, the agitators had also caused damage at the Thoothukudi Collectorate.

Mr. Palaniswami, who met Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam and senior officials at the Secretariat, called for peace, and said the “Amma [former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa] government” would take legal steps on the issue in deference to popular sentiments.

Giving an account of the controversy surrounding the Sterlite plant, Mr. Palaniswami said after the lapse of the validity of the licence for consent to operate the first unit in March, the company had applied to the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board for extension for the period from 2018 to 2023.

Citing five technical grounds, including non-submission of the report of the test on groundwater in villages in the neighbourhood of the plant and the discharge of hazardous waste in violation of rules, the TNPCB, on April 9, rejected the application. Challenging the rejection, the company had moved the Appellate Authority, which had adjourned the case to June 6. When the matter came up for hearing on May 17, an Additional Advocate-General, who appeared on behalf of the Board, had “strongly argued” for the denial of nod to the plant, the Chief Minister stated.

TAMIL NADU

Organisations flay police firing



STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, MAY 23, 2018 00:00 IST

Demand the immediate closure of the Sterlite copper plant in Thoothukudi

Several organisations gathered here to condemn the police firing during a rally demanding the closure of the Sterlite Copper plant in Thoothukudi on Tuesday.

The SOCO Trust's Managing Trustee A. Mahboob Batcha condemned the firing and claimed that this was a clampdown on democracy.

Members of People's Watch who were present at the spot said that Chief Minister's inaction during the 100 day protest and his gross negligence during the rally resulted in the loss of several lives and left many others grievously injured.

The organisation demanded the immediate closure of the Sterlite Copper plant and sought an enquiry by the National Human Rights Commission as well as the State Human Rights Commission.

It demanded that compensation to the families which lost their kin must be

increased to Rs. 20 lakh from the stated Rs. 10 lakh. An immediate order should be issued by the Government of Tamil Nadu to stop police excess in Thoothukudi, said Executive Director of People's Watch Henri Tiphange.

C.J. Rajan, State president, Samam Kudimakkal Iyakkam, echoed the similar demands. He added that the Chief Minister should resign immediately.

Student organisations like Democratic Youth Federation of India and Tamil outfits like the May 17 Movement, Dravidar Viduthalai Kazhagam, Tamil Desiyaper Iyakkam and Egathipathiya Edurpu Iyakkam protested at Periyar bus stand junction at different times during the day. Police arrested them and released them later.

Members of the Tamil Nadu Vanigar Sangangalin Peravai stated that they would organise a bandh on May 24 to show support for the protesters.

TODAY'S PAPER

Police firing claims 10 lives in T.N.



Common call: Protesters marching towards the District Collectorate, demanding closure of Sterlite's copper manufacturing unit at Thoothukudi on Tuesday. **■ N. RAJESH**

Flashpoint Thoothukudi

- Protests began 100 days ago at Thoothukudi, demanding closure of the Sterlite plant
- Leaders of various opposition parties expressed support for the protesters through the months
- Protesters decided to launch a rally on May 22 to commemorate 100 days
- Collector issued prohibitory orders under Section 144 (CRPC), effective Monday evening to Wednesday evening
- Protesters marched towards the Sterlite plant on Tuesday morning
- An altercation led to stone pelting. Police carried on lathi charge, burst tear gas shells, and then began shooting at the protesters

J. Praveen Paul Joseph

THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 23, 2018 00:00 IST

March by anti-Sterlite protesters to the Collectorate turns violent in Thoothukudi; 60 sustain injuries

At least nine persons, including a 17-year-old girl, were killed in police firing at a massive rally taken out demanding the closure of Sterlite Copper, a Vedanta group copper smelter unit, in the port town of Thoothukudi in south Tamil Nadu on Tuesday.

The rally in which thousands of local people participated under the banner of 'Anti Sterlite Movement', turned violent in the morning with sections of protesters allegedly setting fire to vehicles, including those belonging to the

police.

Around 60 persons, including police personnel, suffered injuries in stone-throwing and were admitted to the Government Medical College Hospital. Thoothukudi GH sources say the condition of two more gunfire victims is critical.

A team of vascular surgeons from Madurai GH are rushing for assistance. Police had on Monday night clamped prohibitory orders in Thoothukudi after the Movement, along with opposition parties and traders' and fishermen bodies, called for a march to the Collectorate demanding closure of Sterlite Copper.

Tuesday marked the 100th day of the latest round of protests against the company, which has been accused of being responsible for air and water pollution leading to health hazards.

Violence broke out when a large number of protesters, who took out a rally from various places of Thoothukudi, moved up to the four-road intersection close to the traffic signal on Palayamkottai Road. Since prohibitory orders were in force they were denied permission by police personnel to proceed further. Angry protesters started to hurl stones and footwear at policemen, who carried shields with protective outfit. All attempts to stop the protesters failed and they marched ahead after breaking the barricades and toppling a striking force vehicle near the traffic signal. The police made yet another attempt near the Third Mile bridge on the Palayamkottai Road to control the protest. Tear gas was used to quell the rioting mob, which continued to regroup. An explosive substance was thrown at the police.

Meanwhile, a few photo journalists were manhandled by some protesters. The Hindu 's Rajesh was assaulted and a memory card removed from his camera.

HC predicted the stir taking a violent turn



Mohamed Imranullah S.

CHENNAI, MAY 23, 2018 00:00 IST

Court had underscored the need for the Collector to act

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court had foreseen the violent scenes witnessed during Tuesday's anti-Sterlite protest in Thoothukudi district.

Disposing of a writ petition filed by Vedanta, the holding company of Sterlite, seeking protection for the plant, the court had, last Friday, said: "The wordings in the pamphlets (calling for the protest on Tuesday) indicate that the protesters do not have any intention of conducting a peaceful protest."

Justice M.S. Ramesh went on to state: "It is not in dispute that the pamphlets calling upon the general public to protest on May 22, 2018 to demand the

factory's closure have been widely circulated...On an overall reading of the pamphlets, the proposed protest is likely to trigger a law and order situation.”

In its affidavit, the petitioner company stated that it had made representations to the Thoothukudi Collector and the Superintendent of Police on April 9 and 16 to declare a radius of one kilometre around the copper plant as well as its residential quarters, Thamira-I and Thamira-II, as a ‘no protest zone’.

The company had insisted on government officials issuing a prohibitory order by invoking their power under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. During the course of the hearing of the case, a government counsel informed the court that none had approached the police so far, seeking permission for any kind of protest on May 22. He also stated that in case of any illegal protest, the police would initiate “stringent action against the violators.”

‘Rule of law paramount’

The court was also informed that already, 38 cases had been registered with respect to the ongoing protest demanding the closure of the copper smelter plant, and that 21 individuals had been arrested and remanded in judicial custody.

After recording the submissions, the judge said it was needless to point out that the freedom of speech and expression was subject to “reasonable subordination to social interest and preservation of public order.”

Further, stating that the rule of law should be the primary consideration in case of an illegal protest or an unlawful assembly, the judge said the invocation of Section 144 of the Cr.P.C. would be “highly recommended” in the public interest. Conscious of the fact that the decision to invoke Section 144 fell within the jurisdiction of the Collector, Justice Ramesh said the official could not sit on the representations indefinitely, especially “when there are sufficient materials to show that there is a possibility of a protest on May 22, 2018.”

Non-consideration of the representations would amount to dereliction of duty, he observed, and directed the Collector to pass appropriate orders on or before May 21.

TAMIL NADU

Leftist outfits stage protest against firing



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THANJAVUR, MAY 23, 2018 00:00 IST

Cadre of the Left parties, their front organisations and fringe Tamil nationalist groups on Tuesday staged a road block and demonstration here in protest against the police firing at anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi.

Cadre of CITU and the All India Democratic Women's Association staged a brief road block at Old Bus Stand. AIDWA district secretary S. Tamilselvi and CITU district secretary C. Jayapal led the protest.

CPI(M) cadre, led by its town secretary Gurusamy, staged a demonstration near the railway junction, which was followed by another protest led by Tamil nationalist groups led by Cauvery Rights Retrieval Forum coordinator P. Maniyarasan. Makkal Adhikaran State treasurer K. Kaliappan, Tamil Desiya Munnani general secretary Ayyanapuram Murugesan and others participated.

Tiruchi

Twenty-eight members of Makkal Adhikaram on Tuesday were arrested after they staged a protest here condemning the police firing on anti-Sterlite

protesters at Thoothukudi.

Police sources said the Makkal Adhikaram members assembled at the Central Bus Stand in the evening where they staged a demonstration demanding the closure of the Sterlite plant at Thoothukudi.

The members squatted on the road when they were arrested.

The police also arrested Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam district president M.P. Chinnadurai, who took part in the protest.

All arrested persons were released a couple of hours later, the sources added.

TAMIL NADU

Victims with gunshot wounds at hospital



TAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 23, 2018 00:00 IST

60 people are under treatment at Thoothukudi GH, 20 police personnel at a private hospital

The Director General of Police has issued a statement explaining how the protest got out of hand, necessitating lethal force by the police.

The press release from the DGP's office claimed that the protesters repeatedly engaged in violent acts like hurling stones and attacking police officials, which prompted the police to use tear gas and resort to a lathicharge. After this, a section of the protesters left the spot, but another group organised a road roko near Theresapuram, during which they damaged public property and again

went on a stone-pelting spree. As the situation was getting out of control, the police were forced to open fire. A “few protesters” were killed in the police firing. “Elaborate security arrangements are being made by high-ranking police officers. The DGP requests the people to give their full support towards maintaining law and order in the locality,” the release added.

Those who were killed in the police firing were identified as Jeyaraman, 62, of Usilampatti; P. Tamilarasan, 35, of Kurukku Salai; Shanmugam, 25, of Teachers’ Colony; K. Gladstone, 40, of Lourdhammalpuram; K. Kandaiya, 55, of Ceylon Colony; S. Maniraj, 34, of Damodhar Nagar; Venista, 16, and Anthony Selvaraj, 35, of Thoothukudi.

Normal life thrown out of gear in port town



STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 23, 2018 00:00 IST

Buses grounded, power supply cut

Normal life was thrown out of gear in riot-torn Thoothukudi, as commercial establishments downed shutters and public transport came to a standstill.

The Sterlite staff quarters, located adjacent to the Collectorate, was also not spared by the protesters, as they torched around 15 vehicles parked on the premises. Power supply was suspended after the protesters set transformers and other power equipment on fire. As many as 40,000 shops in Thoothukudi, Srivaikuntam, Puthiyamputhur and Ottapidaram remained closed as traders responded to the strike called by the Anti-Sterlite Movement.

While a large number of people took out a rally demanding the closure of Sterlite Copper, members of Thoothukudi Central Merchants' Association, led

by its president P. Vinayagamurthy, staged a demonstration on the SAV School grounds.

According to sources in the Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation, 17 buses were damaged in stone-pelting incidents. Most of the services from two depots were suspended after 2 p.m. The police force was not adequately deployed in these depots. After the police firing, no TNSTC bus was operated in the town.

The massive protest was called by the Anti-Sterlite Movement several days ago, but no preventive arrests were made. The police had miserably failed to tackle the situation, said R. Subburaj, a resident. A social activist said nobody could have been arrested as a preventive measure since the protest was not led by any specific person. The call for the rally was not taken seriously, and simply promulgating prohibitory orders, the authorities thought no tense situation would arise, the activist said.

TAMIL NADU

28 held for protest against police firing

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

TIRUCHI, MAY 23, 2018 00:00 IST

Twenty-eight members of Makkal Adhikaram on Tuesday were arrested after they staged a protest here condemning the police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters at Thoothukudi.

Police sources said the Makkal Adhikaram members assembled at the Central Bus Stand in the evening where they staged a demonstration demanding the closure of the Sterlite plant at Thoothukudi.

The members squatted on the road when they were arrested.

The police also arrested Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam district president M.P. Chinnadurai, who took part in the protest.

All arrested persons were released a couple of hours later, the sources added.

TAMIL NADU

Protest against police firing



amil nadu Bureau

VIRUDHUNAGAR, MAY 23, 2018 00:00 IST

Forty seven cadre of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) staged protests at Virudhunagar and Srivilliputtur on Tuesday condemning the firing against anti-Sterlite protesters in which nine persons were killed.

The protest was led by party district secretary, Arjunan, at Srivilliputtur.

The agitators condemned the police for having opened fire at peaceful protesters.

Salem

The police rounded up about 30 members of the Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) when they organised road roko agitation and attempted to burn the effigy of Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami to condemn the police action against the Sterlite protesters in front of the Collectorate here on Tuesday.

Speaking to reporters, the District Secretary of DYFI, N. Praveen Kumar, said that the police action was totally unwarranted and demanded the resignation of the Chief Minister owning responsibility.

The police in a separate incident, arrested 20 members of the All India Youth Federation (AIYF) affiliated to CPI.

They also demanded the resignation of Chief Minister.

The cadre of the CPI (M) staged demonstration in front of the head post office in the city condemning the police action in Thoothukudi. They attempted to burn the effigies of Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister and also Thoothukudi Collector.



Police face off against protesters (above); protesters toppling vehicles (below) in Thoothukudi on Tuesday | **M BALAMURUGAN, RMR VIVEKANANDAN**

KEY POINTS

- Stir was confirmed Sunday**
- Section 144 was imposed on Monday
- At 9am on Tuesday police arrest Thoothukudi MLA NP Geetha Jeevan and others**

Government statements maintain nine killed in police firing, however, sources put the toll at 11

At least 15 police personnel were injured, two critically

A late night release from DGP's office Tuesday said protesters indulged in violence even after police issued warnings, fired tear gas and resorted to lathi charge. "With no other option and to protect public property, police had to open fire.... Now, adequate police personnel have been posted in the spot and calm prevails. Public are requested to cooperate," the statement said.

STERLITE PROTEST: 11 KILLED IN FIRING

On 100th day, peaceful anti-Sterlite protests turn violent as police open fire at protesters; deceased include women, a minor

S GODSON WISELY DASS
@ Thoothukudi

AT least 11 people, including women and a minor, were killed and 20 grievously injured after police reportedly opened fire multiple times against anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi on Tuesday, the 100th day of protests demanding the Sterlite Copper plant in the district be shut. Another 100 are believed injured in clashes between police and protesters, with official estimates claiming 20,000 people took to the streets. Unofficial estimates put the figure at 50,000 against 2,500 police deployed to thwart protesters' bid to besiege the district Collectorate.

Police placed barricades and resorted to lathi-charge to confine protesters to their localities. However, amid overwhelming support for the stir, thousands joined the rally for the 6km between the town and Collectorate. At FCI godown junction, 700m from the Collectorate, police fired tear gas in a futile attempt to disperse the crowd. Protesters still continued to march to the Collectorate on the Thoothukudi-Tirunelveli national highway.

By 11am, the crowd reached the Collectorate and started hurling stones at police barring their entry. Police opened fire once the crowd breached the collectorate premises and reached the verandah. Sources said 12 persons sustained bullet injuries, and over 20 grievous injuries as protesters ran helter-skelter. An eyewitness alleged that police did not fire warning shots and aimed at chest level. With protesters occupying highways, some rushed the injured to Thoothukudi General Hospital and a private hospital on motorbikes. Meanwhile, the crowd turned violent, damaging over 25 two-wheelers and three government jeeps. Protesters lit rubber tyres and rolled them towards police, sources said.

As news of the police action spread, mobs ravaged the nearby District Industrial Centre and Sterlite Copper staff quarters, torching vehicles at both locations. They started toppling police vehicles at bypass, P&T colony and other areas. Near FCI godown, a group of protesters allegedly assaulted police personnel while women police were reportedly targeted at Third Mile. Mediapersons were assault-

ed by protesters, who damaged video and still cameras. At least five journalists were injured.

At around 12.45 pm, police opened fire at the bypass near the Collectorate after a mob hurled stones at a police bus ferrying at least 20 personnel. Police again opened fire at Threspuram, near the SP's bungalow, killing one. Some sustained injuries after police opened fire at close to 3pm outside Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital, which relatives of deceased were prevented from entering. Tension prevailed at Thoothukudi even as protests were seen in Tirunelveli and Madurai. Neither Thoothukudi Collector nor SP addressed media.

According to sources, the deceased are P Thamilarasan (35) of Revolutionary Students and Youth Front, Shanmugam (25) of Teachers colony, K Glaston (40) of Lourdhammalpuram, K Kathaiya (55) of Ceylone colony, S Maniraj (34) of Dhamodramnagar, Venista (16), Anthoni Selvaraj (35) and Jayaram (62) of Usilampatti, Karthik (22) of Cardwell colony and Vineetha of Threspuram. One of the deceased, a woman, has not been identified. **Full Coverage P6, 7**



CM ANNOUNCES PROBE, SOLATIUM

CM Edappadi K Palaniswami expressed grief over the loss of lives while defending police action. After chairing a high-level meeting, he announced a solatium of ₹10 lakh for kin of the deceased and a one-man inquiry. He assured appropriate legal action on Sterlite issue in tune with public's views.



GOVT IN DAMAGE CONTROL MODE

Palaniswami swings into action, orders one-man committee under a retired HC judge to probe into the incident; orders ₹10 lakh ex-gratia for the kin of deceased; defends police action, saying protesters turned violent; security beefed up to prevent matters from snowballing

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Chennai

EXPRESSING deep grief over the loss of lives when police opened fire at the protesters, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami on Tuesday defended the police, saying that they were forced to open fire as the protesters turned violent. However, he said, the government, in tune with the views of the public, would take appropriate legal action over the Sterlite issue.

Just after the police shootout, the chief minister chaired a high-level meeting at the secretariat, in which Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam, DGP TK Rajendran, Chief Secretary Girija Vaidyanathan and senior officials were present.

Lamenting that unfortunately 11 people lost their lives in the shootout, Palaniswami announced that a one-man commission, headed by a retired judge of the High Court, would inquire into what happened on Tuesday. He declared a solatium of ₹10 lakh each to the families of the victims and assured government employment would be provided to one member from each of the families of the victims. Those who had suffered serious injuries would be given ₹3 lakh and those who suffered minor injuries ₹1 lakh.

Disclosing that he had directed the Thoothukudi district administration to provide the best possible treatment to the injured, the

CM wished them a speedy recovery. Palaniswami said that a 20,000-strong crowd, violating the prohibitory orders issued under Section 144 of the IPC, laid a siege to the Collectorate. Despite requests from the police, the agitators pelted stones at them and torched police vehicles as well as the vehicles parked inside the Collectorate. The crowd also pelted stones at the Collector's office. The police, therefore, had to quell the violence, prevent damage to public properties and save the lives of the public.

Defending cops

Despite requests from the police, the agitators pelted stones at them and torched police vehicles as well as the vehicles parked inside the Collectorate, the chief minister said

The CM traced the origins of the Sterlite issue and how AIADMK had stood by the people on this issue.

Sterlite Industries (India) Limited is located at Meelavittan near Thoothukudi and has been functioning for the past 20 years. Following complaints of gas leak from this plant, late Chief Minister, J Jayalitha, ordered closure of the plant and disconnected power supply. The Sterlite management challenged this closure order before the National Green Tribunal and based on the order of the Tribunal, the plant was reopened on May 31, 2013. However, the State government challenged the Tribunal's permission to reopen the Sterlite plant before the Supreme Court and the case is still pending disposal. Since the licence for operation of this plant expired in March 2018, the Sterlite management applied to the TNPCB for renewal of licence for the period of 2018-23.



Protesters set ablaze vehicles, pelted police personnel with stones when a peaceful protest took an awry turn on Thoothukudi collectorate campus on Tuesday. The mob reportedly damaged the camera of Express lensman (left bottom) during the melee | M BALANURUGAN & RMR VIVEKANANDAN

Genesis of trouble

FEBRUARY 2018: When the news of Sterlite planning to expand its unit trickled in, town erupted in protest

MARCH 31: Licence to operate granted to Sterlite unit at Meelavittan village by TNPCB expires

APRIL 25: Vaiko files a PIL seeking permanent closure of Sterlite at the High Court

Case adjourned to June 7

Another public interest litigation filed by one Fathima before the Madurai Bench to close the Sterlite Industries for operating without environmental clearance

Sterlite too files a petition at the Bench, seeking a direction to declare a periphery of one km around the Sterlite Industries as 'no-protest zone'

MAY 18: Madurai Bench reserves order on Fathima's petition

Vedanta had initially proposed to establish the plant in Gujarat but this was opposed vehemently and it was decided to shift the establishment of the plant to Goa but because of opposition the plant could not be established in Goa

TEXT: VINODH ARULAPPAN

No alert, no warning, cops shot to kill protesters, claims eyewitness from ground zero

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Thoothukudi

THE policemen shot to kill. All were hit on head and chest. Most of them died on the spot. Bikes were used by protesters to take the lifeless bodies to nearest Nallathambi Hospital opposite to Thoothukudi Collectorate in a hope that they will survive, re-

counted an eyewitness. Jai Ganesh (name changed) was unaware about the police firing as he joined the protest in front of the Collectorate. "There was a verbal duel between police and protesters and then firing started. A body fell on my brother's shoulder," he said. Jai Ganesh said that it all started around 9.30am. "We were noti-

fied about the protest. The government had permitted holding meetings against Sterilite but it had imposed Section 144 in sensitive areas," he said. Initially, the protesters were split into two groups. One group was holding protest at Old Bus Stand as the government had okayed it. A shamiana was also put there. But then seeing the

people defying the odds and rushing towards the collectorate, that group also joined the protesters. As they neared the Water Tank near VVD signal, a huge posse of police stopped them. This is where the first altercation with police began. Women were attacked by police. Seeing the injured women, the protesters got angry and pelted stones. The po-

lice were outnumbered and ran away. Then protesters crossed Third Mile bridge and were stopped near the Highway bridge. The police fired teargas, but the protesters started pelting stones at policemen. The cops gave in and left the spot. The crowd then set two bikes on fire under the Highway Bridge. As they reached the collectorate, an

argument broke out between the cops and the protesters. Around 50 to 60 cops were there. There was first a lathicharge and when it did not stop us, police opened fire without warning. They fired at chest and head and those who were hit died on the spot. Some were rushed to nearby Nallathambi hospital and from there were rushed to gov-

ernment hospital. I saw most of those hit were motionless. But the firing did not result in dispersal. Most of the protesters angered started pelting stones. The entire area turned into a war zone. It was the phone calls from near and dear ones who heard about police firing and deaths that made people give in their protest," he said.



Idinthakarai on the boil

Tirunelveli: The angst against the State over the firing at protestors in Thoothukudi spilled over to Tirunelveli, where anti-Koodankulam Plant protestors from Idinthakarai set afire a TASMAL outlet. The war machines were rumbling in the coastal districts with protestors converging at Kuthankuzhi coastal village to decide the next course of action. While sporadic incidents of stone pelting were reported, a government bus came under attack; no casualty was reported. Kanniyakumari Superintendent of Police N Shreenath was camping in Kudankulam to monitor the situation. The superintendent of police said that as apart from the liquor shop incident, situation was normal in Kudankulam area. Meanwhile, TNSTC suspended bus service to Thoothukudi from Tirunelveli. Thoothukudi bound buses from Tirunelveli stopped at Pudukottai in Thoothukudi district.

44 arrested for staging protest

Thoothukudi: As many as 44 agitators were arrested for staging protests against the State government and the police department in the city. The detenus were attached to a clutch of Tamil outfits, including Dravidar Viduthalai Kazhagam. The agitators gathered near Periyar Bus Stand and raised slogans against the State government, police department and also the copper plant. They demanded a Supreme Court judge panel to probe into the firing incident. Later, they attempted to stage a sit-in protest, but were bundled out of the venue by policemen. Earlier, members of the Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) staged a protest against the police department and the State government, condemning the firing. Lawyers in the district are also planning a mega protest against the incident on Wednesday.



Cars, bikes gutted as agitators go on arson spree

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Thoothukudi

THE protest at Thoothukudi did not leave the Sterlite employees untouched as a number of agitators sneaked into the residential quarters of the staff and ran amok. At least 30 vehicles, including cars and bikes, were gutted in the arson attack.

Sources said that the protestors sneaked into the compound during the melee and went on an arson spree. Vehicles and a back-up generator were gutted in the incident. The protestors also directed their anger at two fire tender vehicles that came to douse the blaze. None of the staff was injured in the incident.

Over 15 police personnel were admitted to Thoothukudi medical college hospital after sustaining grievous injuries during the



A fire tender belonging to Sterlite set on fire by agitators; and the remnants of cars after the attack | RMR VIVEKANANDAN

clash. Sources said that the injuries of two of the policemen was severe, said sources.

Sources said that when the anti-Sterlite protest took a violent turn, the protestors and the police clashed at various places.

Policemen manning the collectorate and outposts were pelted with stones. During the melee, the protestors caught hold of two policemen separated from their main company and were assaulted.

At FCI godown, Third Mile and Teachers colony, the mob countered the police lathi charge by hurling stones. The unruly mob roughed the police, including women police, with logs and iron rod.



Hospital turns into fortress as hapless kin get barred

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Thoothukudi

THE Thoothukudi medical college hospital resembled a fortress, with a large posse of policemen manning the premises. Security personnel barred worried relatives from entering the premises for the better part of the day and relented only in the evening when the tension subsided.

Around 65 people injured in the firing and the resultant stampede were admitted to the medical college. The condition of two persons, who suffered bullet injuries, was said to be critical. A large number of injured were undergoing treatment at various hospitals across the town.

Confusion prevailed on the premises when the policemen barred worried relatives from entering the premises. Most of the agitators sustained injuries in the stampede to avoid the bullets, sources said. Some of the injured have not been identified, sources said.

Trader body declares indefinite bandh

The Thoothukudi town central traders association announced indefinite shutdown condemning police firing at public and Anti-Sterlite campaigners, leaving over 10 dead on Tuesday. The trader body put up shutters in support of the anti-Sterlite rally.



Nurses at hospitals had a busy time looking after the injured. Here a nurse stares blankly at a camera even as a paramedic attends on an injured | RMR VIVEKANANDAN

Confusion galore

Confusion prevailed on the premises when the policemen barred relatives from entering the premises. Agitators sustained injuries in the stampede to avoid the bullets, sources said

Thoothukudi MLA condoles deaths

Thoothukudi MLA Geetha Jeevan consoled the families of the deceased at their houses here on Tuesday. DMK MLA Geetha Jee-

van visited bereaved families of J Anthony Selvaraj (46) of Krishnarajapuram near Thalamutunagar and another S Maniraj (25) of Dhamodra Nagar and consoled the families.

Political parties blockade road in Tiruchendur

Cadre belonging to different parties resorted to road blockade at Tiruchendur condemning the firing. Cutting across party lines, VCK, AAP, Nam Tamilar, SFT, SMK among others participated in the protest, demanding action against police top brass for opening fire at the protesters.





The barbaric attack by police and government's attempts to cover it up are to be condemned. Families of the victims should be paid a ₹25 lakh each. Those injured should be treated effectively

S Ramadoss, PMK founder



Negligence of the State government that does not respect people's sentiments has led to loss of lives. The State government is responsible for the violence and loss of lives that occurred in Thoothukudi

Rajinikanth



A government that is elected by the public should engage in preventive measures or in resolution through dialogue. Resorting to lathicharge and firing that leads to loss of lives only shows the fascist nature

S Thirunavukkarasar, TNCC president





My heart is filled with grief on knowing about the loss of lives of 11 persons. My condolences to the bereaved families. At this critical hour, I appeal to all sections of society to be calm and help in maintaining the peace in the State

Banwarilal Purohit, Governor



The gunning down of people in the Sterlite protest is a brutal example of State-sponsored terrorism. These citizens were murdered for protesting against injustice. My thoughts & prayers are with the families of these martyrs

Rahul Gandhi, Congress president



A government that is elected by the public should engage in preventive measures or in resolution through dialogue during protests. Instead, resorting to lathicharge and firing only shows the fascist nature of government

Seeman, Naam Tamizhar Katchi



Govt flayed for 'poor handling' of stir

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Chennai

COMING down heavily on the Tamil Nadu government and the police for not showing sensitivity in dealing with the anti-Sterlite protests which turned violent on Tuesday leading to loss of lives, political parties demanded an inquiry commission headed by a sitting High Court judge to probe the incident and a compensation of ₹1 crore each for families of the victims.

Saying that either the District Collector or the Superintendent of Police or even any of the ministers hailing from southern districts could have spoken to the protesters to cool the temper, DMK working president MK Stalin charged that instead of doing

so, they showed negligence and thought that bullets and guns were enough to deal with the stir.

He said, "The government should set up an inquiry commission headed by a sitting judge to go into the firing incident. Moreover, each of the victims' family must be given a compensation of ₹1 crore." He also sought sacking of the Director General of Police (DGP) TK Rajendran and dispatching of a team of ministers to allay the fears of the protesters, besides Chief Minister himself visiting Thoothukudi.

Tamil Nadu Congress Committee president S Thirunavukkarasar stated that killing the public by firing on them smacked of a fascist tendency and noted that shooting would never be a solution to protests. He also sought a

probe by a sitting High Court judge and due compensation for the victims' kin.

PMK founder Dr S Ramadoss felt that the protests could have been brought to an end, had the State government- which had a bounden duty to act tough against the polluting Sterlite copper plant- given a promise of taking action to shut down the firm.

The government should immediately talk to the protesters and restore peace and tranquility and also take steps to permanently close down the Sterlite plant.

Demanding that the AIADMK government be dissolved for failing to maintain law and order, DMDK founder Vijayakant said the police resorting to caning and lobbing teargas shells had made the peaceful stir turn violent.

Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPM) State secretary K Balakrishnan demanded that the Edappadi K Palaniswami-led government resign, owning responsibility for the unleashing attack on the protesters. He appealed to his party men to stage protests, including road blockade and shutdown to condemn the attack on the protesters.

VCK leader Thol Thirumavalavan wanted the Chief Minister to explain why the Tamil Nadu government was frantically trying to help the Sterlite management by considering the lives of the people of little value.

CPI State secretary R Mutharasan said that the Tamil Nadu government was responsible for the tragic incident in Thoothukudi.



TRACING VIOLENCE

Bloodiest police action since independence

S KUMARESAN @Chennai

THE Tuesday's police firing on the anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi is perhaps the bloodiest in Tamil Nadu's history since Independence. The highest toll was recorded in 1980 when eight persons were killed when police opened fire on farmers protesting in Kurichakulam village near Kovilpatti in Virudhunagar district.

There was a spate in police firing on farmer protesters between 1970 and 1993. After this, the number of such incidents came down and Tuesday's incident is a cause for worry.

"According to my knowledge, 48 farmers were killed between 1970 and 1993. The farmer protests were staged for a decent price for their produce, free electricity and lower interest rates,"



says lawyer KS Radha Krishnan, now a spokesperson in the DMK and once a frontline leader in Tamilaga Vivasayigal Sangam.

The 1980 incident at Kurichakulam, in which eight were killed was the bloodiest. "The last one was at Kovilpatti in 1993 in which one farmer was killed," said Radha Krishnan.

The State in 2016 recognised deaths of at least some victims by announcing solatium of ₹5 lakh for families of six killed in police firing in Virudhunagar between 1970 and 1980.

The police also opened fire in March 1982, in Mandaikkadupudur in Kanniyakumari district, during a clash between two reli-

gious groups. Six fishermen were killed. The only major violence after the end of the farmer protests was in 1999 when a large numbers of employees of various tea estates at Manjolai in Tirunelveli district gathered in Trinunelveli on July 23. The protesters marched towards the Collectorate. On their way, an altercation erupted with police who caned and injured most of the frontline leaders. Hundreds ran helter-skelter and many jumped into Thimirabarani to escape; 17 people drowned.

The last incident of police fire on public was in 2011 at Paramakudi in Ramanathapuram district. An outfit was taking out a procession on September 11 to pay homage to Immanuel Sekaran, for which police had denied permission. Seven were killed in the police firing.



Firing was police strategy to break protest: Activists

Say senior ministers could have talked to protesters to ease tension

C SHIVAKUMAR @ Chennai

WHILE even in Kashmir only pellet guns were used, why should the Tamil Nadu police use bullets? This is the most common question raised by activists and legal luminaries.

Former judge of the Madras High Court K Chandru said the handling of the protest by the district administration and police highlighted lack of planning on the part of the district administration and also police.

"Police in no way should have fired at people and they should have been taught how to deftly handle such a situation," said the former judge.

He also said that instead of calling for more forces to quell the situation, it would have been better if some senior minister would have held discussions with the people.

The administration also did not have any regulatory order on procession and rather they permitted the rally.

"In Delhi, for such protests they use water cannons. There is no need to fire on people. The police should have fired in the air," said the former judge.

V Suresh of the People's Union for Civil Liberties said the move by police was to break the protest for a cause to which the people remained committed.

"The whole issue has been happening for a long time. It is not like the jallikattu protest. This is a classic police strategy. They have used multiple strategy. First is to discredit the entire movement and to shift the entire issue from Sterlite to police firing," said Suresh.



Henry Fignagne of People's Watch, an NGO, has demanded a joint suo moto enquiry by the

People protesting against Sterlite in Chennai on Tuesday | D SAMPATH KUMAR

NHRC and the SHRC on the entire duration of the Sterlite protest and the brutal use of police force at the protest.

He also demanded compensation of ₹20 lakh for each of the families of the victims.

"It was a total failure on the part of the Central and State intelligence agencies both of which evidently were not prepared for such a protest and completely misjudged the people's anger on the ground. People's Watch observes that the government, which was given a choice to either stand by its people or by the industry, chose the private entity instead," he alleged.

"People's Watch is also forced to remind the government that on March 24, 2018, a similar show of strength witnessed the peaceful assembly of nearly 2 lakh protesters in Thoothukudi. Why did the State fail to take pointers from that protest?" he added.

Minister doubts ulterior motive behind protest

Chennai: Fisheries Minister D Jayakumar on Tuesday alleged that there might be some ulterior motive behind taking out a procession towards a place where prohibitory orders were in force and indulging in violence despite the government decision to close down Sterlite plant. ENS

Film directors stage protest in Chennai

Chennai: Film directors Bharathiraja and Ameer, Thamizhaga Vazhvirimai Katchi leader T Velmurugan and many others staged a protest at the office of Chief Secretary Girija Vaidyanathan on Tuesday night as she did not come forward to receive their petition regarding the Sterlite issue. ENS



3 surrender in double murder case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Ramanathapuram

THREE accused, said to be involved in the murder of two persons at Valantharavai, near Ramanathapuram, surrendered before the Judicial Magistrate Court, Aruppukottai, on Tuesday. The district police are questioning 10 other suspects.

Sources in the police said that the accused who surrendered in the court have been identified as S Karthik, D Prakash and Arun. Special police teams are on the lookout for S Dharma, D Muniyasamy and some others who were connected with the case registered at the Kenikarai Police Station, under sections 147 (punishment for rioting), 148 (rioting, armed with deadly weapon), 324 (voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons), 307 (attempt to murder), 302 (punishment for murder) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code.

While M Boominathan (32) and R Vijay (26) died on the spot after a gang slashed their throat on Sunday night, one Saleem alias Vijay, who was severely injured and is being treated at the Government Rajaji Hospital, Madurai, filed a complaint against the accused.

Meanwhile, the relatives of the deceased received the bodies from the Government Headquarters Hospital, Ramanathapuram, after the police had a talk with them.

The relatives claimed that a few weeks back, the deceased, along with some villagers, had submitted a petition seeking protection, to the district police.

They said that the apathy of the police had cost two lives.

Case booked under...

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Thoothukudi firing was police strategy to break protest: Activists

Say senior ministers could have talked to protesters to ease tension



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People protesting against Sterlite in Chennai on Tuesday | D SAMPATH KUMAR

By C Shivakumar

Express News Service

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TAGS tamil nadu police Sterlite



Smoke billows out of burning vehicles after a violent protest demanding closure of Vedanta's Sterlite unit entered the 100th day, in Thoothukudi, on Tuesday.

— DC

ANTI-STERLITE PROTESTS 10 KILLED AS COPS FIRE

M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 22

Ten persons including a woman and a teenage girl were killed in police firing as the anti-Sterlite agitation in Thoothukudi turned violent on Tuesday. Ten persons were killed in the police firing on the 20,000-strong protesters who ransacked the district collector's office and set fire to vehicles while one fell to bullets when the protesters lay siege to the camp office of the district superintendent of police.

Chief Minister K. Palaniswami, who also holds home portfolio, announced a compensation of ₹10 lakh to the families of each of the deceased, and ordered a judicial inquiry into the incident.

Earlier in the day, the protesters marched from Our Lady of Snows church to lay siege to the district collector's office demanding the permanent closure of the copper smelter plant of Sterlite belonging to Vedanta group, defying prohibitory orders.

The police which tried to stop the march were pelted with stones.

Around one-km away, a 50-member police team led by the Tirunelveli district

CM ANNOUNCES RELIEF

The chief minister announced a compensation of ₹10 lakh to the families of each of those killed, ₹3 lakh to those seriously injured, and ₹1 lakh for people who suffered minor injuries.



I was grieved to know 10 persons were unfortunately killed in this incident

— Edappadi K. Palaniswami, CM

The police had to take action under unavoidable circumstances to protect public life and property as the protesters resorted to repeated violence... police had to control the violence.

superintendent of police Arun Sakthikumar tried to stop the procession from going near the district collector's office. The police too fired tear gas at the protesters. The mob, however, could not be controlled and attacked the policemen.

Having driven away the police, the protesters had a cake walk to the collector's office and ransacked it. Around 25 two-wheelers of the collectorate staff were burnt. As the situation went out of control, the regrouped police resorted to firing in which eight—Jeyaraman of Usilampatti, Kandhaiah of Ceylone colony, Glaston of Lourdhmalpuram, 188-year-old girl Venista, Tamilarasan of Kurukkuchalai, Shan-mug-

am of Masilamanipuram, and V. Antony Selvaraj and Maniraj of Thoothukudi—were killed. Karthik, II year student of Kamaraj College, succumbed to injuries in GH. Later as a fishermen mob tried to lay siege to the camp office of Thoothukudi district police superintendent on the Beach Road, police opened fire in which 29-year-old Vinitha, wife of Joseph, was killed. She was hit in the head and died on the spot, eyewitnesses said.

"The police had to take action under unavoidable circumstances to protect public life and property as the protesters resorted to repeated violence... police had to control the violence," Chief Minister Palaniswami, said.

■ P3

29-YEAR-OLD VINITHA HIT IN HEAD, DIED ON SPOT, SAY EYEWITNESSES

FROM P1

Later as a fishermen mob tried to lay siege to the camp office of Thoothukudi district police superintendent on the Beach Road at Thersepuram, police opened fire in which 29-year-old Vinitha, wife of Joseph, was killed. She was hit in the head and died on the spot, eyewitnesses said. Later as a fishermen's mob tried to lay siege to the

camp office of Thoothukudi district police SP on beach road, at Thersepuram the police resorted to firing killing Vinitha (29) wife of Joseph.

The protesters, driven out of the collector's office turned their wrath against the family of the Sterlite employees and entered the Sterlite employees quarters-Thamirai - and burnt around 25 cars and two wheelers.

From planned 'peaceful' protest to deadly violence

Radical outfits, absence of responsible leadership behind escalation of violence during protest

M. ARULOLI | DC THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 22

Elements of radical outfits taking the reins of the anti-Sterlite procession turned it violent that resulted in the loss of 10 innocent lives on Tuesday.

Tuesday's procession against Sterlite though lesser in number compared to a similar protest on March 24, when around 50,000 gathered, however became violent because of the absence of responsible leadership rendered by retired professor Fathima Babu and Vinayagamorthy.

The violence according to a fishermen leader seemed pre-meditated as he suspected that Prof Fathima Babu was removed the previous day from the leadership of the protest, as she was against the protest turning violent at any stage.

Tuesday's protest unlike the more massive one on March 24 was led by Makkal Adhikaram cadres, who was joined by men clad in black T-shirts belonging to Naam Thamilar Katchi and Puratchikara Ilaigarr Munnani (Radical Youth Front).

It was members of these radical groups, who first started pelting stones and attacking the police inviting them to retaliate with bullets.

Even after bringing the situation under control, the armed police patrolling along the streets of the pearl city targeted the youths clad in black T-shirts.

Mistaking an 18-year-old boy who accompanied his mother to a private hospital, the armed police entered the private hospital and beat him severely until the hospital staff came to his rescue.

The boy fell a victim to the police wrath for the simple reason that he had worn black T-shirt.



Sterlite employees quarters on fire and protesters burnt around 25 cars and two-wheelers.

STERLITE CONUNDRUM

Sterlite Copper represents the copper unit of the Vedanta Limited, which is a subsidiary of London-based metals major Vedanta Resources Plc. Vedanta specialises in mining and refining non-ferrous metals - copper, zinc and aluminium.

Thoothukudi Sterlite Copper unit operates a 400,000 metric tonnes per annum, copper rod plant, sulphuric acid plant of more 12,00,000 MTPA and a phosphoric acid of 220,000 MTPA and a 160 MW coal based power plant.

Copper concentrates from copper mines are blended with bought out concentrates from other sources and treated to get optimum results.

The Vedanta Limited (formerly known as Sesa Sterlite Limited/Sesa Goa Limited). Vedanta Limited was created after scheme of amalgamation and arrangement (Group Simplification Scheme) of Sterlite Industries (India) Limited, the Madras Aluminium Company Limited, Sterlite Energy Limited and Vedanta Aluminium Limited with Sesa Goa Limited.

COMPANY DOGGED BY CONTROVERSIES

1975 Sterlite Industries (India) Ltd. was amalgamated

1986 - The company name was changed to Sterlite Industries (India), Ltd.

In 1993 District Collector of Ratnagiri, Maharashtra directed Sterlite Industries (India) Ltd to suspend construction work following year-long agitation by local people.

1994, the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) issued a No Objection Certificate asking the company to carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

Considering the ecological sensitivity of the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere reserve, the NOC carried a condition stipulating that the factory should be located 25 km from the Gulf of Mannar.

In 1995, TNPCB issued consent to establish order authorising Sterlite to commence construction.

The company violated the setback condition, and the plant was built within 14 km of the Gulf of Mannar. Police came down heavily on agitating local residents.

1996, TNPCB issued the plant a licence to operate, ignoring the violation of its own licence condition on setback from the Gulf of Mannar.

Within months of commissioning the plant, local residents lodged complaint against the firm stating foul smoke emanated from the plant and posing health hazard.

1997: Controversy dogged Rs.1,000-crore copper smelting plant. However, it received a clean chit from the three member independent committee set up by the Tamil Nadu government to look into the environmental fallout of the project.

1998 National Environmental

Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) found the industry violated various safety norms. The institute identified ground water contaminated with arsenic, lead, selenium, arsenic, aluminum and copper. Ambient air quality was also severely affected.

On November 23, 1998, Madras High court closed the factory.

After having indicted, the NEERI gave clean chit to the plant, with recommendations that the factory must be run at full capacity to conduct a Comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment.

On March 2, 1999 local residents hospitalised due to gas leak from the plant.

TNPCB permitted Sterlite to nearly double its production from 40,000 tonnes per annum to 70,000 tonnes per annum.

On January 2, 2001, residents complained of toxic wastewater from Sterlite's arsenic laced wastewater reportedly flooded the Silverpuram, Meelavittan and Kaluthakuttan tanks.

2004 - When the TNPCB limited production to 70,000 tonnes per annum, Sterlite manufactured 1,75,242 tonnes of copper anode.

TNPCB permitted Sterlite to nearly double its production from 40,000 tonnes per annum to 70,000 tonnes per annum.

2005 - Expansion of smelter to 300,000 tonnes per annum. The company received permission to operate copper smelter plant.

2006 - Expansion of smelter to 400 kilo tonnes per annum

2012 - 80 MW captive power project, Synchronised.

On September 21, 2004, a Supreme Court Monitoring

Committee (SCMC) team inspected Sterlite and recommended that environmental clearance for the company's proposed expansion from 391 to 900 tonnes per day (300,000 tonnes per annum) not be given.

On September 22, 2004, the Ministry of Environment and Forests issued an environmental clearance to Sterlite for plants it had already begun to construct.

On November 16, 2004, TNPCB confirmed that the company was engaged in unlicensed production.

In 2008, the company further expanded its production.

On September 28, 2010, Madras High court ordered closure of Sterlite citing violations of law and for polluting the environment.

On October 1 the Supreme Court stayed the closure order of the Madras High Court.

During 2010 and 2013 three workers were killed and several injured in eight hazardous incidents.

On March 23, 2013, Thoothukudi town experienced a massive gas leak.

On March 29, 2013, again a closure order was given citing violation of the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act. Subsequently, the order was lifted.

On April 2, 2013, the Supreme Court refused to shut down the unit. However, it ordered the company to pay a fine of Rs 100 crore for violating various norms.

For the past 100 days the local residents staging protest demanding shut of the unit. Various political leaders and social activists also staged agitation across the state. Help also poured in from Tamils across the globe.

Stalin: TN should have acted swiftly, close down plant now

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, MAY 22

The police action on the protesters who turned violent while demanding the closure of Vedanta's Sterlite Copper smelter plant in the port town of Thoothukudi in the State on Tuesday allegedly for causing pollution, evoked spontaneous condemnation from political party leaders. DMK working president M. K. Stalin who condemned the "police atrocities" during the protest this morning, said the police should have deftly handled the issue before it took a serious turn.

"The State government should have sorted out the issue earlier through talks with the protesters. At least now the government should take steps to close down the plant," he said. Since the government did not take any steps in this regard, the people had launched a massive rally today. The police should have taken appropriate precautionary measures before the situation went out of control leading to a riot. The police failure and their brutal attack on the protesters is condemnable," the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, told reporters here.

He claimed that the people were indiscriminately attacked and the police opened fire at them. On his party's stand he said the DMK has been consistently opposing the plant and today his party member and former State Minister Geetha Jeevan who participated in the protest has been arrested.

OPPOSITION PARTIES DENOUNCE POLICE FIRING ON ANTI-STERLITE PROTESTERS

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, MAY 22

The opposition parties in Tamil Nadu denounced the police action on the anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi in the State on Tuesday morning and have demanded the immediate closure of the copper smelter plant. Owing to the seriousness of the situation, DMK working president M. K. Stalin cancelled his visit to Bengaluru for the swearing-in of Karnataka CM designate H. D. Kumaraswamy and would instead head straight to the port town.

"The DMK has already sent a committee to Thoothukudi to enquire into the violent incidents leading to police firing and submit a detailed report. Now the State Chief Secretary has informed that the government has sent two IAS officials to the strife-torn town," Mr Stalin said after calling on the CS Girija Vaidyanathan. He also admitted that he had cancelled his visit to Bengaluru and would rush to

Likening the incident to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre during the British rule, MDMK founder Vaidyanathan, who led several anti-Sterlite protests, denounced police action, saying it is "condemnable."

CPI (M)'s state unit demanded the chief minister's resignation while PMK, DMDK, Congress and other parties assailed the government over the issue.

Meanwhile, Geetha Jeevan, who represents the Thoothukudi Assembly constituency, said the government should take proper steps on the Sterlite plant's issue. She insisted that violence cannot be accepted under the guise of protesting against the plant.

On Tuesday marking the 100th day of protest, held near the old bus stand in

GV CONDOLES DEATHS, APPEALS FOR CALM

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, MAY 22

Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit has expressed grief over the loss of lives in Thoothukudi district during the anti-Sterlite protest on Tuesday and appealed to people to maintain calm.

"My heart is filled with grief on knowing about the loss of lives of 11 persons in Thoothukudi district today. My condolences to each one of the bereaved families. At this critical hour, I appeal to all sections of society to be calm and help in maintaining the peace in the state," the Governor said in his message.



A lone policeman caught in mob attack in the anti-Sterlite stir in Thoothukudi on Tuesday. The picture demonstrates the mob fury as much as it bares the police ineptitude leaving this poor cop alone under his brittle bamboo shield.



Several vehicles destroyed in fire after march turned violent in Thoothukudi.

DMK didn't take action to close Sterlite, says min

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 22

Fisheries minister D. Jayakumar who described the police firing incident during anti-Sterlite protest on Tuesday morning as "distressing," blamed the then DMK government for not taking any action to close down the Sterlite plant.

Indicating that it was because of the DMK that the situation had precipitated, he claimed that the former chief minister J. Jayalalithaa wanted to close down Sterlite plant but it was because of the National Green Tribunal judgment the Sterlite was allowed to function. The state went on an appeal and



the matter is pending before the Supreme Court. "The state is clear (on the issue) and does not want Sterlite to continue its operation," Mr Jayakumar told reporters here on Tuesday.

Justifying the police action of firing at the protesters, the minister asserted that the police was forced to open fire because the situation went out of control and the protesters

turned "extremely violent." "Violence inside the collectorate is unacceptable and firing was unavoidable," he said and added that violence can never be a solution for any problem.

While assuring on behalf of the government to take steps to prevent the plant's operation, he said the government appreciated the sentiments of the protesters on the issue. Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami was "concerned" over today's developments and had discussed the matter with the officials. Reinforcements were rushed from neighbouring districts to assist the local administration in restoring normalcy.

Anti-Sterlite mob targets mediapersons

DC CORRESPONDENT
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 22

Media persons too could not escape the wrath of the anti-Sterlite protesters, who brutally attacked four lens men.

Spotting Rajesh, photographer of 'The Hindu', on the terrace of a building close to the collector's office taking pictures of the mob indulging in violence and arson, a crowd pulled him down and beat him up badly. They abused him saying he was taking pictures for supplying evidence to the police and damaged his camera, eyewitnesses said, adding that Rajesh has been admitted in the government general hospital with bruises all over.

Another mob attacked Tamil Daily 'Dinakaran' photographer Felix, who sustained head injury and

was also admitted in GH. 'Jaya TV' reporter Selvaraj and Cameraperson, Manikkam too were beaten up and chased away by the angry mob.

Eyewitnesses said the mob also set fire to the Pulsar bike of journalist Shanmugavel parked under the bypass bridge on the national highway. "I tried lodging a complaint at the Sipcot police station but was sent away saying come tomorrow because we are busy today", he said.

The angry protesters also damaged the bikes of three other journalists, even choosing the vehicles with 'Press' stickers to vent their fury. The marchers also stoned the Toothukudi Press Club near the south police station. News18 cameraman Murali Ganesh was lucky to escape by locking up the doors from inside.

STERLITE PLEADS FOR PEACE

The beleaguered Sterlite has pleaded for peace while pointing out that its copper plant Thoothukudi is "currently non-operational as we await approval for the Consent to Operate".

"It is with great sorrow and regret that we witnessed today's incidents around the protest at Tuticorin. The company has appealed to the government and authorities to ensure the safety of our employees, facilities and the surrounding community. The Sterlite Copper plant is currently non-operational as we await approval for the Consent to Operate", the company said.

STERLITE ROW

Protest may trigger L&O problem: HC

J.STALIN | DC
CHENNAI, MAY 22

The opposition charge that the anti-sterlite agitation on Tuesday was mishandled by the government and the police response was inadequate, finds support in a recent order of the Madras high court on this issue.

Dealing with the Sterlite's petition seeking declaration of area "to the radius up to one kilometer" around the factory as "Protest Free Zone"/"No Protest Zone", Justice M.S.Ramesh of the Madurai Bench of the Madras high court had even on May 18 noted that from the wordings in the protesters' pamphlets in circulation, it was clear that they "do not have any intention to conduct a peaceful protest".

"On an overall reading of the pamphlets as well as taking into consideration of the various disturbances and untoward incidents happening in and around the petitioner factory, the

They have been protesting for 100 days even while planning strategies to escalate the temperature and decibels; yet cops seem to have lost their ears-and-eyes in the dustbin of political espionage", quipped a one-time cop. He says he is 'at great peace and happiness' just rewinding his

proposed protest is likely to trigger a law and order situation and in this scenario, invoking section 144 of Cr.PC would be highly recommended in public interest. This recommendation is being consciously made in view of the earlier antecedents where several cases have been registered against violators and the present pamphlet also indicates the possibility of an unlawful assembly and an illegal protest", the judge had stated in his order allowing Sterlite's petition and directing the Thoothukudi district collector to consider Sterlite's request for invoking sec-

days in the force 'in those glorious years gone by'.

"Every chota (small) chap now is making big noise—organising road blocks, damaging public property, paralyzing administration, packing away the IPL with snakes, et cetera, et cetera—and yet the police intelligence does not

tion 144 of Cr.PC.

The judge had then noted that the Sterlite had sought such protection from the collector in representation of April 9 and a reminder on April 16. "...such a representation cannot be kept pending indefinitely, particularly, when there are sufficient materials to show that there is a possibility of a protest on May 22.

Non consideration of the representation would amount to dereliction of the ordinary duties of the district collector, the first respondent in the petition, and in such circumstances, this court would be justified in invoking its power

appear to be alert to its responsibilities of bringing to the notice of the government the potential trouble spots before the amber turns red. They (intel cops) seem to be more involved in spying about political rivals of the ruling party, than be bothered about peace and public order".

under Article 226 of the Constitution of India and direct the district collector to consider the representation".

It's thus clear that the district administration was literally driven by the court to issue the 144 order, while the subsequent ground reports and Tuesday's eruption prove further that there has not been any matching response from the administration to the impending threat that even a judge of the high court, sitting in his chamber was able to spot by merely looking at the pamphlets of the protesting outfits long in circulation.

WHAT'S POLICE INTELLIGENCE DOING ALL THESE DAYS?

₹10 LAKH EACH, GOVT JOBS TO KIN OF VICTIMS

FROM P1

The chief minister also announced a compensation of ₹10 lakh to the families of each of those killed, ₹3 lakh to those seriously injured, and ₹1 lakh for people who suffered minor injuries and assured government jobs for the members of the deceased family.

Earlier in the day, CM, who also holds the home portfolio conducted a high-level meeting with chief secretary Girija Vaidyanathan and the DGP T. K. Rajendran to review the law and order situation in Thoothukudi.

The Madras Union of Journalists also condemned the police firing.

In a statement, MUJ alleged that more than six journalists were caught between the police and the agitators.

Firing unfortunate, says CM

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 22

Chief Minister K. Palaniswami on Tuesday condoled the death of ten persons, who died in Thoothukudi. Palaniswami termed the incident unfortunate and said the police resorted to shooting as it was the last option to maintain law and order situation.

The protests for the closure of Vedanta's Sterlite Copper unit in Thoothukudi over pollution con-

● **Earlier in the day, CM conducted a high-level meeting with chief secretary Girija Vaidyanathan and the DGP T. K. Rajendran to review the law and order situation in Thoothukudi**

cerns turned violent, with agitators hurling stones, prompting the force to open fire. Ten people have died in police action, the CM said in a statement early evening.

He also announced a judicial inquiry into the violence. Detailing the events, he said that the government understood public sentiment and would not allow the functioning of Sterlite plant.

He also recalled that the former chief minister Jayalaithee was against Sterlite operations that polluted water and air. The state government would follow directions laid down by the AIADMK leader Amma, the statement said. ■ P4



DIDI CONDOLES KILLING OF 10 PEOPLE

Kolkata, May 22: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee condoled the death of 10 people in police firing during protests against the Sterlite copper plant in Tuticorin district of Tamil Nadu.

“I just landed in Bengaluru to the shocking news about the incident near the Sterlite Tuticorin plant. My thoughts and prayers with the people of Tamil Nadu at this hour of grief. My deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives and hope the injured recover soon,” Mamata said in a tweet.

The police action followed months-long protests for the closure of Vedanta’s Sterlite copper unit in Thoothukudi about 600 km from Chennai over pollution concerns.

Video of anti-Sterlite protest shows cop saying 'at least 1 should die'

DECCAN CHRONICLE.

Published May 23, 2018, 9:34 am IST

Updated May 23, 2018, 9:47 am IST

Eleven people, including a 16-year-old girl, have died in Tuticorin during the anti-Sterlite protest on Tuesday.



A Tamil Nadu police personnel in plainclothes placing himself atop a police bus, a few meters away from where people had gathered to hold anti-Steralite protest. (Photo: ANI | Screengrab)

Tuticorin: A video shows a Tamil Nadu police personnel in plainclothes placing himself atop a police bus, a few meters away from where people had gathered to hold anti-Sterlite protest.

Other police men armed with assault rifles and clad in bullet-proof jackets are seen near the vehicle.

Soon another police official is seen climbing the van from behind and the policeman who was already on the vehicle was seen handing over his assault rifle to him.

According to a video released by news agency ANI, the policeman crawls the length of the bus in a few seconds and takes his position. And then a voice from the background makes a shocking statement: "At least one should die".

A few seconds after the voice, the policeman fires his first shot.



[#WATCH](#) Local police in Tuticorin seen with assault rifles to disperse protesters demanding a ban on Sterlite Industries. 9 protestors have lost their lives. [#TamilNadu](#). (Earlier visuals)
10:02 PM - May 22, 2018

Eleven people had died in Tuticorin during the anti-Sterlite protest on Tuesday. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palanisamy ordered an inquiry into Tuesday's police action. Congress president Rahul Gandhi described the incident as a "murder" and "state-sponsored terrorism".

16-year-old girl was among the eleven killed in police firing as the anti-Sterlite protests in Thoothukudi on Tuesday turned violent.

Starting from 'Our Lady of Snows' Church in the coastal area, 20,000 people marched to lay siege to the collector's office. They were demanding permanent closure of the copper manufacturing company over pollution concerns.

The protests were going on in Tuticorin for over three months now, but violence erupted on Tuesday with agitators fighting pitched battles with police, prompting it to open fire. Hurling stones and setting government vehicles and public property on fire, the agitators went on the rampage in the town.

Chief Minister Palanisamy, who also holds home portfolio, announced a compensation of Rs 10 lakh to the families of each of the deceased, and ordered a judicial inquiry into the

incident.

Security has been beefed up in Thoothukudi following the clashes. Section 144 (prohibiting assembly of more than 4 people in an area) has been imposed in the city.

Meanwhile, Madras High Court's Madurai bench will deliver interim order on the ongoing construction of a new copper smelter by Sterlite industries in Thoothukudi today.

The 100-day long protest has been supported by several celebrities including Kamal Haasan and Rajinikanth.

Opposition leaders including M K Stalin of the DMK have blamed the ruling AIADMK government for ignoring the protests for 100 days because it was peaceful.

"The inaction of the government has led to the people's protests and police resorting to firing to control it," M K Stalin said, demanding that the plant be shut down immediately for good.

Kamal Haasan also blamed the government for ignoring peaceful protests. "Citizens are not criminals... They are the ones who lose their lives," he said.

On Tuesday, Sterlite Copper in a statement said: "It's with

great sorrow and regret that we witnessed today's incidents around the protest today at Tuticorin. The company has appealed to the government and authorities to ensure safety of our employees, facilities and surrounding communities. Sterlite Copper plant is non-operational".

Tamilians murdered for refusing RSS ideals: Rahul on anti-Sterlite killings

DECCAN CHRONICLE.

Published May 23, 2018, 11:37 am IST

Updated May 23, 2018, 11:37 am IST

If you're seeing this message, that means **JavaScript has been disabled on your browser**, please **enable JS** to make this app work.

Rahul Gandhi said the bullets of RSS and PM Modi's supporters can never crush emotions of people of Tamil Nadu.



11 people were killed and several others were injured during police firing on Tuesday. (Photo: PTI)

Mumbai: In a sharp response against the killing of 11 people in police firing during the anti-Sterlite protest in Tuticorin, Congress president Rahul Gandhi took to Twitter and said, "Tamilians are murdered because they refused to bow down to the ideology of the Rashtriya Swayamsewak

Sangh (RSS)."

The Congress chief added that his party is with the people of Tamil Nadu and that the bullets of the RSS and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's supporters can never crush the emotions of people of the state.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Social media campaign fuels protesters against Sterlite

TNN | May 23, 2018, 12.53 AM IST



TUTICORIN: Promotional videos and a strong campaign on social media asking people to join the mass protest on Tuesday to put pressure on the government to close down Sterlite helped mobilise several thousand people.

Over 5,000 protesters gathered near the Our Lady of Snows church in the morning though Section 144 of the CrPC was in force in select areas covering the collectorate and the Sterlite plant. According to the protesters, this turned out to be a campaign against the government and the district administration. Members of some radical outfits had sneaked into the protest, which was predominantly led by youth from Tuticorin and nearby districts.

“Had the government allowed us to stage a protest, we would have silently marched to the collectorate, petitioned the collector, staged a demonstration and waited for the government to close down the polluting plant. The violence was what the police wanted, to bring the protest to an end. It was completely unexpected,” a protester said. He added that the violence was an outcome of the protesters’ frustration over 22 years.

“We are fighting a capitalist government machinery that is completely against the interest of the people, he said on the condition of anonymity. “We made representations, fought a legal battle and pleaded with the government to close the plant. But it did not happen,” he said. The protesters are introspecting where and what went wrong during the protest, he said and added that the struggle will continue until the copper plant is closed.

Human rights activist and executive director of People's Watch Henry Tiphagne, who was also in Tuticorin on Tuesday, told TOI that there was total violation of human rights in the police firing. He alleged that the people who shot at people were not in police uniform and that no formal procedure was followed before the firing.

Tiphagne said the intention of police was not to disperse the crowds. "Had it been so, they would have used pellets and not bullets. The fact that some of the victims had received bullets in their mouth is proof that the motive of police was to kill," he said and added that the NHRC and the SHRC should conduct an inquiry into the incident.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Those who fired were not in uniform: People's Watch

TNN | May 23, 2018, 12.51 AM IST



MADURAI: Violation of human rights in the police firing on Tuesday was total and those who fired the shots at the people were not in police uniform, alleged human rights activist and executive director of People's Watch, Henry Tiphagne, who was witnessed to what he called police excesses.

Q: Were you present during the protest in Tuticorin on Tuesday?

HT: Yes, we went there to monitor the protest and had informed the superintendent of police of Tuticorin as well as the State Human Rights Commission of our move to do so.

Q: What did you see?

No formal procedure was followed before the police firing. Lathicharge and tear gas should have preceded the police firing if any, but both happened only outside the collectorate premises. It was direct firing inside the collectorate.

Q: Did firing take place at any other place except the collectorate?

HT: Yes, there was firing in Therespuram also.

Q: Did you see the police open fire?

HT: I saw some persons open fire, but I do not know if they were police as they were not in uniform. No proper public

announcement was made before the police firing and it was indiscriminate.

Q: Would you say that the firing was not done with an intent to disperse the crowds?

HT: Yes, for one if at all the police wanted to disperse the crowds they should have used pellets and not bullets. The fact that some of the victims received the bullets in their mouth is proof that the motive of the police was to kill.

Q: Were the protesters the reason for opening fire?

HT: No. They were not out of control and continued to march towards the collectorate, but it was only after the police opened fire that they entered the Sterlite staff quarters and set fire to vehicles.

Q: What is your immediate demand?

HT: The inquiry should be conducted only by NHRC and SHRC and not a retired judge, as commissions headed by retired judges have failed to deliver justice in many cases.

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“Had the government allowed us to stage a protest, we would have silently marched to the collectorate, petitioned the collector, staged a demonstration and waited for the government to close down the polluting plant. The violence was what the police wanted, to bring the protest to an end. It was completely unexpected,” a protester said. He added that the violence was an outcome of the protesters’ frustration over 22 years.

“We are fighting a capitalist government machinery that is completely against the interest of the people, he said on the condition of anonymity. “We made representations, fought a legal battle and pleaded with the government to close the plant. But it did not happen,” he said. The protesters are introspecting where and what went wrong during the protest, he said and added that the struggle will continue until the copper plant is closed.

Human rights activist and executive director of People's Watch Henry Tiphagne, who was also in Tuticorin on Tuesday, told TOI that there was total violation of human rights in the police firing. He alleged that the people who shot at people were not in police uniform and that no formal procedure was followed before the firing.

Tiphagne said the intention of police was not to disperse the crowds. "Had it been so, they would have used pellets and not bullets. The fact that some of the victims had received bullets in their mouth is proof that the motive of police was to kill," he said and added that the NHRC and the SHRC should conduct an inquiry into the incident.

Thoothukudi firing: Entirely preventable

MAY 24, 2018 00:02 IST

There must be a thorough inquiry into the lead-up to the deaths in Thoothukudi

The protest against the copper smelter plant of Sterlite Copper in Thoothukudi has witnessed its deadliest turn so far, with the [death of 12 people in police firing](#). It was clear the movement would put up a show of strength on May 22, the 100th day of this phase of protests — in fact, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court had predicted that it was “likely to trigger a law and order situation” and declared that the “protesters do not have any intention of conducting a peaceful protest”. Yet, the Tamil Nadu government failed to gauge the intensity of what was coming. It is a tragic irony that such an angry and violent demonstration could have been staged at a time when the plant is not operational and after the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board refused to renew its consent to operate. It raises questions about the government’s failure to drive this point home forcefully, and casts a doubt about the real intent of some of the protesters, possibly a small section comprising hardline groups. The immediate task is to compensate the public for its losses and end the alienation of the affected communities through talks. But the commission of inquiry headed by retired judge Aruna Jagadeesan must examine why 12 lives were brutally snuffed out, more specifically, the chilling accusation that snipers were deployed by the police force to pick out protesters in a premeditated manner. Any police response must be commensurate with the gravity of the situation; there is no place for heavy-handedness and a disproportionate use of force. The inquiry must establish who gave the orders to fire and on what basis. Also, why the police failed to intervene well before the protest developed an angry head of steam.

Sterlite stakes claim to be India’s largest copper producer and is a major presence in Tamil Nadu’s industrial mix. But it has had mixed fortunes over the two decades of its production, including periods when it was under

administrative orders of closure, a . 100-crore fine imposed for pollution by the Supreme Court in 2013, and consistent opposition from fishermen. Now, there is a fresh injunction and the Madras High Court has restrained it from a proposed capacity expansion plan. This, together with the decision to not renew consent for operation, gives a moment for pause for all sides. An urgent process, such as an all-party meeting, is needed to heal the wounds, and infuse confidence in the community. A credible environmental audit should be undertaken, without compromising on the 'polluter pays' principle. The TNPCB, which usually scores poorly on transparency, should commission credible experts to assess the quality of air and water in Thoothukudi. Only such verifiable measures will build public confidence, and make orderly industrialisation viable.

TNPCB orders closure of Sterlite plant in Thoothukudi



T.K. Rohit

CHENNAI, MAY 24, 2018 09:19 IST

Electricity supply to the Sterlite Copper Smelter plant was cut off on Thursday morning

The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) has ordered the closure of [Sterlite Copper Smelter plant](#) in Thoothukudi with immediate effect and disconnected electricity supply to the unit early on Thursday morning.

Orders to close the plant were issued by the Chairman of the TNPCB on Wednesday. The power supply to the unit was disconnected at 5.15 a.m. on Thursday, sources said.

In its orders, the TNPCB said that during inspections undertaken by its officials on May 18 and 19, it was found that “[the unit was carrying out](#)

activities to resume its production operations.”

ALSO

READ



The Hindu explains: Sterlite protests

Following this, the Joint Chief Environmental Engineer, Tirunelveli, recommended disconnection of electricity supply to the plant.

The TNPCB ordered the closure and disconnection of electricity supply under provisions of Section 33A of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, and Section 31A of Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1971.

The Board took cognisance of the application made by Vedanta Ltd. seeking renewal of the Consent To Operate (CTO) and the rejection of the application in April by the Board for non-compliance of certain conditions under the previous CTO.

12 protesters died in [police firing](#) in the last two days in Thoothukudi. On Wednesday evening, the Tamil Nadu government invoked a “[public emergency](#)” and asked internet service providers to cut off internet services for 5 days in Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari districts, to prevent spread of provocative messages on social media by anti-social element

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NATIONAL

One more killed in fresh firing in T.N.

MAY 24, 2018 00:00 IST

Since prohibitory orders under Section 144 of Cr.P.C. promulgated by the district administration with effect from 10 p.m. on Monday, has been extended till May 25, security forces had their hands full dispersing groups of people who gathered in public places. They appealed through microphones to residents to remain indoors.

At the government hospital, panic prevailed after a few unidentified persons hurled a country-made bomb that exploded with a loud noise, just outside the campus.

Subsequently, the security forces fired tear gas twice to deter further attacks near the hospital.

Normal life continued to be disrupted, and there was scarcely any public transport on the roads.

Police sources said they have arrested 67 rioters for the damage caused to many government buildings and for setting 127 vehicles on fire.

Damage to property

On Wednesday, protesters also set ablaze two police buses, two government vehicles and a private vehicle, besides damaging CCTV cameras installed in Bryant Nagar.

Tasmac shops in Anna Nagar were damaged, the sources added.

The State government named retired High Court judge, Justice Aruna Jagadeesan, as head of the committee to conduct an inquiry into the firing incidents and submit a report. Senior IAS officers P.W.C. Davidar and Gagandeep Singh Bedi, who were appointed as monitoring officers by Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, visited Thoothukudi on Wednesday.

TAMIL NADU

Govt. forms panel to probe firing



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, MAY 24, 2018 00:00 IST

Retired High Court judge Aruna Jagadeesan named to head commission of inquiry

Following up on its assurance that a one-person inquiry commission would be constituted to go into the police firing in Thoothukudi that led to the death of 10 persons on Tuesday, the government on Wednesday named retired High Court judge Aruna Jagadeesan to conduct the inquiry.

The retired High Court judge will probe the law and order incidents in Thoothukudi on May 22 when several thousands of protesters defied the curfew in place and submit a report to the government, an official release said.

The announcement was made after a meeting was chaired by Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami at the Secretariat to review the situation following the violence in Thoothukudi.

Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam, senior Ministers Dindigul C. Sreenivasan, K.A. Sengottaiyan, Sellur K. Raju, P. Thangamani, S.P. Velumani, D. Jayakumar, C.Ve. Shanmugam, M.C. Sampath, K.C.

Karuppannan, R. Kamaraj, Chief Secretary Girija Vaidyanathan, Home Secretary Nirajan Mardi and Director General of Police T.K. Rajendran were among those present in the meeting.

Meanwhile, Governor Banwarilal Purohit, who was in Udhagamandalam, cut short his visit and returned to Chennai on Wednesday.

Meeting in Raj Bhavan

Later on Wednesday night, Mr. Palaniswami and Mr. Panneerselvam met Mr. Purohit at Raj Bhavan here. Official sources said the meeting was primarily to discuss the firing incidents in Thoothukudi on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Mr. Jayakumar, Ms. Vaidyanathan and Mr. Rajendran were also present at the meeting.

TV actor lands in trouble after comments on Thoothukudi firing



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, MAY 24, 2018 00:00 IST

Clad in police uniform, she posted a video urging people to stage protests

A woman television artist landed in trouble after she made “damaging” comments on the firing by the police on the protesters in Thoothukudi on Tuesday.

Nilani essays the role of an Assistant Commissioner of Police in a TV serial.

Clip goes viral

After completing the shoot, clad in police uniform, she circulated a video asking people to come forward in large numbers and protest.

The video went viral on Wednesday as many thought she was an officer.

Based on a complaint by Rishi, the Vadapalani police booked a case against Ms. Nilani for offences under Sections 419 (Punishment for cheating by personation), 153 (Wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot), 500 (Punishment for defamation) and 66 d (Punishment for cheating by personation by using computer resource) of Information Technology Act.

Even after the booking of the case, she circulated yet another video on social media justifying her comments.

Tamil film industry condemns police action

Udhav Naig

CHENNAI, MAY 24, 2018 00:00 IST

It was an inhuman act, says Nadigar Sangam

In the last 30 years, the Tamil film industry has always enjoyed a close and polite relationship with the ruling party – be it the AIADMK or the DMK, barring a few exceptions. Since the death of former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa, more and more film personalities have become vocal in criticising the functioning of the State government.

However, the recent brutal killing of more than 10 protesters against the Sterlite Copper plant in Thoothukudi by police has had leading actors roundly condemning the police opening fire on protesters that killed at least 10, besides injuring many and the State government.

Petition to Governor

In a statement on Tuesday, Nadigar Sangam condemned the police violence on protesters and called it ‘an inhuman act.’

Nadigar Sangam president Nasser and general secretary Vishal presented a petition to Governor Banwarilal Purohit.

Mr. Nasser said the office bearers would meet on Thursday to decide on the next course of action.

Mr. Vishal also strongly condemned the Thoothukudi killings and urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to intervene. “What is the need for bureaucrats of the State and others to save Sterlite?” he wondered.

Treasurer Karthi said the opening of fire made one wonder if this was a democratic country. In a video, veteran actor Sathyaraj also raised a question: “Who is important: corporate bosses or our Tamil brethren?”

Actor Arvind Swami also tweeted that he was deeply saddened.

What is the need for bureaucrats of the State and others to save Sterlite?
Vishal

General Secretary, Nadigar Sangam

TAMIL NADU

'Preserve bodies of police firing victims'



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, MAY 24, 2018 00:00 IST

The Madras High Court on Wednesday directed the State government to

preserve the bodies of all those who died in the police firing in Thoothukudi on Tuesday and Wednesday.

A Division Bench of Justices T. Ravindran and P. Velmurugan passed the interim order on a public interest litigation petition seeking an inquiry into the firing incident by the Thoothukudi principal district and sessions judge and a direction to conduct re-postmortem of the bodies in the presence of representatives of the victims.

Legal assistance

After granting time to the government till May 30 for filing a counter affidavit to the PIL petition, the judges ordered that in the meantime, advocates should not be prevented either by the district administration or by the police from providing legal assistance to the victims and their families in Thoothukudi in accordance with the law.

Though Additional Advocate General (AAG) Narmadha Sampath cited imposition of prohibitory orders in the district under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and opposed the petitioner's plea for permitting advocates to provide assistance, the judges wondered how Section 144 could prevent lawyers from rendering legal assistance to victims.

Earlier, during the course of the hearing, when Mr. Justice Ravindran wanted to know whether postmortem had already been conducted, the AAG said it was being done in the presence of judicial magistrates.

TAMIL NADU

CSE condemns killing of anti-Sterlite protesters



CHENNAI

CHENNAI, MAY 24, 2018 00:00 IST

CSE condemns firing on anti-Sterlite protesters

The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) on Wednesday condemned the killing of 11 protesters in Thoothukudi in police firing. “We condemn the killing of innocent protesters. Considering the history of this plant, the residents were justified in protesting against the expansion. This plant has polluted the environment and flouted standards with impunity for 20 years”, said Sunita Narain, Director-General, CSE, said in a statement. Ms. Narain said the Sterlite plant was a “classic case of failed environmental governance”. She said years of violations by the company and concerns raised repeatedly by the residents of the area seem to have mattered little.

Police used AK 47 rifles, claims Stalin



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI/THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 24, 2018 00:00 IST

Urges Chief Minister, DGP to resign owning responsibility

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, who did not even visit the victims of the police firing in Thoothukudi, should accept his failure and step down from his post, DMK working president M.K. Stalin said here on Wednesday.

Mr. Stalin claimed the police used modern firearms, including AK 47 rifles, to kill the protesters as if they were terrorists.

Besides demanding the resignation of the Chief Minister and DGP T.K. Rajendran, Mr. Stalin called for the transfer of the Thoothukudi Collector and the Superintendent of Police.

TAMIL NADU

Firing in Thoothukudi sparks protests in Coimbatore



STAFF REPORTER

COIMBATORE, MAY 24, 2018 00:00 IST

Protesters demand resignation of State Government

Members of the CPI, CPI (M) farmers and lawyers staged protests in various parts of the city on Wednesday against the police firing in Thoothukudi.

Former MP P.R. Natarajan, former MLAs M. Arumugham and K.C. Karunakaran demanded permanent closure of the Sterlite industry. Members of the Naam Tamilar Katchi staged a demonstration near the Coimbatore South Taluk office. Makkal Adigaram members staged a protest near the Power House in Tatabad.

Sources said that farmer-members of the Tamil Nadu Farmers' Association (non-partisan) raised slogans near the farmers' market in Singanallur. Lawyers and members of the People's Union for Civil Liberties demanded the resignation of the State Government and registration of murder case against

police officers for ordering the firing and personnel who fired at the protesters. Social Democratic Party of India also staged a protest.

On May 25, the DMK had called for a protest near the Red Cross Junction.

Around 100 members of various parties, who united under the banner of Tamil Nadu Makkal Medai, staged a protest at the bus stand in Udhagamandalam.

Tirupur Staff Reporter adds:

In Tirupur, journalists staged a demonstration at Udumalpet on Wednesday to protest against the assault on mediapersons at Thoothukudi on Tuesday. The reporters and photojournalists, who participated in the agitation, demanded action against the people who assaulted photo journalists including The Hindu 's photojournalist N. Rajesh, for photographing and video graphing violence near Thoothukudi Collectorate.

CPI (M), CPI, Naam Tamilar Katchi and Aathithamihar Peravai, among others, also staged agitations at various places across the district condemning the police firing.

TAMIL NADU

'DMK, other parties to be blamed for permitting to set up Sterlite unit'

STAFF REPORTER

COIMBATORE, MAY 24, 2018 00:00 IST

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and other political parties that paved the way for Vedanta group to set up the Sterlite copper smelting plant in Thoothukudi are to be blamed for the death of over 10 people in Tuesday's firing, according to Union Minister of State for Finance Pon. Radhakrishnan.

The BJP was aware of the consequences of the setting up of the plant and that was the reason it had protested right in the beginning, Mr. Radhakrishnan told reporters here on Wednesday. The BJP opposed the setting up of the plant right on day one. He had gone on fast for three days, was arrested, and thereafter he continued his fast for another four days.

In response to a question on automatic rifles being used to fire at the protesters, the Minister said he was unaware of the complete details of the incident as he had returned to Chennai only on Wednesday after an official trip abroad. And, from Chennai he had reached Coimbatore to participate in a party conference in Pollachi. He would comment after gathering the full details. A thorough probe was needed into the incident. And, as far as the police action was concerned, it should be to maintain law and order, he said. To a question on he or any other BJP leader visiting Thoothukudi, the Minister said it was for the party's Central leadership to take a call.

TAMIL NADU

MLA justifies firing

STAFF REPORTER

COIMBATORE, MAY 24, 2018 00:00 IST

R. Kanagaraj, Sulur MLA, has justified the police firing at protesters in Thoothukudi on Tuesday saying if they had not opened fire at the rioters, more persons would have died.

The MLA told reporters that the protest against the Sterlite plant that had remained peaceful for 99 days and had turned violent on the 100th day on Tuesday was largely due to the opposition parties aided by rowdies who indulged in arson and riots.

He reasoned that the police had opened fire only after their officers and men were attacked.

Though it was unfortunate that over 10 people were killed, the police action was completely justified as they had to restore law and order.

Protest against police firing



STAFF REPORTER

ERODE, MAY 24, 2018 00:00 IST

Pre-planned attack, say protesters

Condemning the killing of 11 persons in police firing during the anti-Sterlite rally at Thoothukudi on Tuesday, various political parties and organisations staged protest here on Wednesday.

A protest was organised by Puratchikara Ilaigar Munnani at Veerappanchatiram bus stop in which homage was paid to one of its cadre, Tamilarasan, who was killed in the firing.

They said that the brutal attack on its own people was pre-planned and executed by the State Government to instil fear in the minds of the people against protesting.

They also said that all the human rights were violated and the protesters were treated as terrorists while the police gunned them down. They warned that protest will intensify in the coming days over the incident.

When members of CPI attempted to block the road in Sathyamangalam, the police removed 18 cadre, including two women. They wanted the Sterlite Company to be closed permanently and raised slogans against the government. Protest was held in 10 places in the district, including, Perundurai, Bhavani and Gobichettipalayam.

In Salem, a group of students attempted to enter the Collectorate, but were prevented at the entrance.

They observed a minute's silence on the road for the victims and staged protest and raised slogans against the firing.

Members of Makkal Desam Katchi marched towards the Collectorate, but were prevented by the police. They wanted the company to be closed permanently and also action against the personnel responsible for the firing. Members of Puratchikara Ilaigar Munnani staged protest near the Collectorate.

Protests planned in London over weekend

Vidya Ram

LONDON, MAY 24, 2018 00:00 IST

Pressure on Sterlite mounts

A protest is set to take place outside the Indian embassy in London over the weekend, as pressure on Sterlite and authorities in India and the U.K. mounts following the killing of at least 12 people in police firing in Thoothukudi over the past two days and the ruling by the Madras High Court to cease construction on Unit II of the plant.

With the company being headquartered in London and listed on the London Stock Exchange, the city has long been a centre of campaigns against the metal and mining giant's global activities both by NGOs and diaspora groups. The protest on Saturday afternoon is being organised by Foil Vedanta, a grassroots activist group, centred in London but which has linked up with domestic campaign groups, which has been pushing for action on the company for the past few years, alongside Tamil People in U.K., a group representing several thousand members across Britain.

“We want to point to the collusion of the Indian State in these killings. We absolutely condemn the collusion with this British corporate entity who we hold directly responsible for the events,” said Miriam Rose, of Foil Vedanta.

“We are gravely concerned about the treatment of protesters and the violation of human rights,” said Karthik Kamalakannan of Tamil People in U.K. “We also want to express our solidarity with the protesters. We are proud of the stand they have been taking against this corporate giant.” The group held a protest outside the London house of Vedanta chairman Anil Agarwal on Tuesday, as soon as news of the killings broke. Mr. Kamalakannan said the group would also be reaching out to British MPs to push for a parliamentary debate.

Past criticism

Vedanta Resources has faced criticism in the past from politicians and others

in the U.K. over its track record.

Foil Vedanta has repeatedly called for a cross-party inquiry into Vedanta Resources, and a review of the decision by Britain's regulatory authorities to allow the company to list on the London Stock Exchange. "We have been calling for the company to be delisted," said Ms. Rose. "Delisting it would be the ultimate action the government could take. We argue that the regulator never did the due diligence at the time. It should never have been listed."

We want to express our solidarity with the protesters

Karthik Kamalakannan

Tamil People in U.K.

Protesters demand CM's resignation



STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, MAY 24, 2018 00:00 IST

CPI and CPI(M) cadre stage road roko and demonstration at various places in the district

Madurai district witnessed a number of protests on Wednesday, mainly by the Communist parties and a few other organisations, against the police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi on Tuesday, which has resulted in the death of 11 people so far.

Around 100 cadre of the CPI (M), led by its R. Vijayarajan, Madurai urban district secretary, staged a road roko near Periyar bus stand raising slogans against the Tamil Nadu government for 'indiscriminate' firing on protesters.

Cadre belonging to Tamil Puligal Katchi staged a road roko at the venue over the issue later in the day.

More than 100 people from both the organisations were detained by the police.

The CPI (M) organised a protest in Samayanallur. Madukkur S.Ramalingam, State executive committee member, who led the demonstration, called for the resignation of the AIADMK government accepting full responsibility for the deaths.

Stating that the commission of inquiry formed under a retired High Court judge was unacceptable, he said that an inquiry by a serving judge of the Madras High Court must be ordered.

More relief

He demanded that the compensation announced by the government to the family of deceased must be increased to Rs. 1 crore.

The party cadre staged a demonstration in Melur in the evening.

At Othakadai, K. Kalidas, Madurai district secretary, CPI, led a road roko. Calling the State government 'fascist,' he alleged that it acted on behalf of the BJP-led government at the Centre and demanded the resignation of the Chief Minister.

He said that nearly 150 cadre of his party staged demonstrations in at least eight places across the district.

All of them were detained by the police.

TAMIL NADU

Bishops' Council condemns govt.

STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, MAY 24, 2018 00:00 IST

Demands a thorough enquiry

The Tamil Nadu Bishops' Council has strongly condemned the Tamil Nadu government and Sterlite Copper for the police firing on protesters on Tuesday that has resulted in the death of 12 people so far.

In a statement issued by its president Most Rev Antony Pappusamy, it said that the killing of protesters was a fascistic approach and went against democratic principles.

Pointing out that people of Thoothukudi were protesting against Sterlite Copper for more than ten years, the council said that even the judiciary had raised questions about the functioning of the unit on several occasions.

Alleging that Sterlite Copper always tried to suppress the protests instead of listening to the genuine concerns of people, the council said that even the State and Union governments accorded priority for protection of corporate interests than listening to the concerns of people. It criticised the State and Central governments for branding those fighting for environmental issues as “anti-national” and “anti-development.”

Stating that the those who protested for jallikattu through democratic means were earlier branded as terrorists, the council alleged that the government was doing the same thing with anti-Sterlite protesters now.

Demanding a thorough inquiry by a high-level committee on the issue, the council urged the State government to ensure adequate compensation to the injured and families of the deceased.

Protests galore against Thoothukudi police firing



Madurai Bureau

RAMANATHAPURAM/SIVAGANGA, MAY 24, 2018 00:00 IST

Resignation of Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami sought

Volunteers of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), Communist Party of India (Marxist), Naam Tamizhar Katchi (NTK) and other outfits staged demonstrations at different places in the two districts on Wednesday, protesting against police firing on anti-Sterlite rally in Thoothukudi and killing of more than 10 protesters.

DMK district secretary Suba Tha Diwakaran, who led the protest at NSK Veedhi in Rameswaram, said the police firing on those who took out peaceful rally demanding the closure of Sterlite Copper plant was part of a larger conspiracy to silence the protesters and demanded the resignation of Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami.

Alleging that the district administration and the police had mishandled the issue resulting in the loss of lives of at least 12 people, he said the Chief Minister should own moral responsibility and step down. The firing could have been averted had the police mobilised enough strength in advance and handled the situation properly, he said. "It appears to be an indiscriminate firing by the police," he said and demanded action against the erred police officials. He also

demanded that the government pay compensation of Rs. One crore each to the families of those killed in the gunfire. Former Ministers Suba Thangavelan, R. Sathiyamoorthy were among others took part in the protest demonstration.

CPI (M) volunteers staged a protest at Rameswaram bus stand. Addressing the protest, district secretary V. Kasinathadurai alleged that the firing and killing exposed the larger conspiracy to silence the protest against Sterlite. Thoothukudi Collector and Superintendent of Police should be held responsible for the carnage. Peace would return to the district only if Sterlite was permanently closed, he said.

Party office-bearers E. Justin, G. Siva, K. Karunakaran, P.R. Senthilvel and M. Karunamoorthy were among others took part in the agitation. Volunteers of NTK and members of CITU, AITUC and Students Federation of India also staged a protest at Aranmanai in Ramanathapuram town. In Sivaganga, more than 40 volunteers of CPI (M), led by district secretary M. Kandasamy courted arrest after they staged a road roko, protesting against the police firing.

Dindigul

Around 150 members of Thamizhaga Makkal Medai, including those from CITU, CPI and farmers' associations, staged a demonstration near Dindigul Corporation office. The members demanded the resignation of Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami and Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam.

They demanded stern action against the police and other officers involved in the shooting. The members also condemned the sharp hike in the prices of petroleum and other essential commodities. They also flayed 'anti-people' policies of the Central government that completed its four year term on May 23.

Virudhunagar

Over 300 cadre of CPI (M) and CPI were arrested when they staged road roko. The CPI (M) district secretary, Arjunan and CPI former MLA, T. Ramasamy led the protests at Srivilliputtur and Watrap respectively.

The agitation was held in 12 places. Over 40 NTK cadre staged a demonstration in Sivakasi, led by town secretary, Selvam.

Police action flayed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THANJAVUR, MAY 24, 2018 00:00 IST

Makkal Adhikaram has criticised Tuesday's police action against protesters in Thoothukudi.

In a press release issued here on Wednesday, the social outfit's State treasurer K. Kaliappan said the act of the Thoothukudi Collector in making himself scarce when he was expected to act amounted to gross criminal negligence for which he must be prosecuted.

Using firearms of unprecedented power, police acted in a vengeful manner with an intent to kill and not contain the agitated the protesters.

'Inhuman'

"We strongly condemn the inhuman killings, and want the State Government to act against the DGP and other police officers concerned, besides compensate the loss of lives," Mr. Kaliappan added.

TAMIL NADU

Police firing barbaric,says Dhinakaran

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

TIRUCHI, MAY 24, 2018 00:00 IST

The police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi was ‘barbaric’, and the unsavoury incident only showed the ‘impotency’ of the State government, Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK) leader T.T.V. Dhinakaran said here on Wednesday.

Addressing mediapersons, he termed the one-man commission of inquiry announced by the government to probe the violence an eyewash.. A commission headed by a retired judge would not serve any purpose. An inquiry panel headed by a serving Madras High Court judge should be constituted instead, Mr. Dhinakaran said.

Noting that the agitation had been going on for over 100 days, he questioned what the State Intelligence Wing and the Q Branch CID were doing all along.

The situation in Thoothukudi took a violent turn and culminated in the police firing due to the “indifferent attitude” of the District Collector and the “wrong approach” of the police, who were “acting at the behest of their political masters”, he said.

“People have come to the considered view that the [current] government should no longer exist,” he claimed.

The police had acted in a “frenzied manner” by opening fire, he added.

Dismiss Thoothukudi Collector, SP, says Dhivakaran

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

TIRUCHI, MAY 24, 2018 00:00 IST

'Duo responsible for the violence'

V. Dhivakaran, brother of V.K. Sasikala, on Wednesday demanded the dismissal of the Collector and Superintendent of Police of Thoothukudi district.

The riots and violence during the anti-Sterlite protests at Thoothukudi demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the State government, Mr. Dhivakaran, who leads the AIADMK 'Amma' faction, told reporters after garlanding the statue of Perumpidugu Mutharaiyar in the city.

Holding the Collector and the SP responsible for the unsavoury turn of events, he said peace and normalcy would return only if the two officials were dismissed immediately.

Compensation

Demanding the closure of the Sterlite unit, Mr. Dhivakaran said a higher quantum of compensation should be given to the families of the victims. Further, government job must be given to a member of the family of the deceased.

He expressed confidence that the inquiry commission set up by the State government to probe the Thoothukudi firing would get concrete evidence.

"The government is unable to arrest actor-turned politician S.Ve.Shekar, but protesters are being gunned down. It is for the people to judge," he said.

Entirely preventable

MAY 24, 2018 00:00 IST

There must be a thorough inquiry into the lead-up to the deaths in Thoothukudi

The protest against the copper smelter plant of Sterlite Copper in Thoothukudi has witnessed its deadliest turn so far, with the death of 12 people in police firing. It was clear the movement would put up a show of strength on May 22, the 100th day of this phase of protests — in fact, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court had predicted that it was “likely to trigger a law and order situation” and declared that the “protesters do not have any intention of conducting a peaceful protest”. Yet, the Tamil Nadu government failed to gauge the intensity of what was coming. It is a tragic irony that such an angry and violent demonstration could have been staged at a time when the plant is not operational and after the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board refused to renew its consent to operate. It raises questions about the government’s failure to drive this point home forcefully, and casts a doubt about the real intent of some of the protesters, possibly a small section comprising hardline groups. The immediate task is to compensate the public for its losses and end the alienation of the affected communities through talks. But the commission of inquiry headed by retired judge Aruna Jagadeesan must examine why 12 lives were brutally snuffed out, more specifically, the chilling accusation that snipers were deployed by the police force to pick out protesters in a premeditated manner. Any police response must be commensurate with the gravity of the situation; there is no place for heavy-handedness and a disproportionate use of force. The inquiry must establish who gave the orders to fire and on what basis. Also, why the police failed to intervene well before the protest developed an angry head of steam.

Sterlite stakes claim to be India’s largest copper producer and is a major presence in Tamil Nadu’s industrial mix. But it has had mixed fortunes over the two decades of its production, including periods when it was under administrative orders of closure, a Rs. 100-crore fine imposed for pollution by

the Supreme Court in 2013, and consistent opposition from fishermen. Now, there is a fresh injunction and the Madras High Court has restrained it from a proposed capacity expansion plan. This, together with the decision to not renew consent for operation, gives a moment for pause for all sides. An urgent process, such as an all-party meeting, is needed to heal the wounds, and infuse confidence in the community. A credible environmental audit should be undertaken, without compromising on the 'polluter pays' principle. The TNPCB, which usually scores poorly on transparency, should commission credible experts to assess the quality of air and water in Thoothukudi. Only such verifiable measures will build public confidence, and make orderly industrialisation viable.

Thoothukudi firing: Entirely preventable

MAY 24, 2018 00:02 IST

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ARRESTS



Policemen escorting a few protesters arrested from Anna Nagar in Thoothukudi on Wednesday

ASSAULT



Police attacking a protester in front of the government hospital

AND ATTACK



Day after, protesters continued pelting security personnel with stones

INDIAN EXPRESS Thu, 24 May 2018
epaper.newindianexpress.com/c/28932138

PROBE ON

Wide scope of inquiry for the high-level one-person committee in Thoothukudi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

THE State government on Wednesday announced the appointment of Aruna Jagadeesan, a retired judge of the Madras High Court, to head the inquiry commission into the police firing at Thoothukudi on Tuesday, which claimed more than 10 lives.

The announcement followed a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami at the Secretariat. The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam, senior ministers, Chief Secretary Girija Vaidyanathan, DGP TK Rajendran and senior officials.

The commission will inquire into the law and order incidents



Even the Marina Beach in Chennai was out of bounds as a precaution for the gentry after the violence

that followed thousands of persons laying a siege to the Collectorate at Thoothukudi violating the prohibitory order in force under Section 144 Cr.P.C, demanding the immediate closure of Sterilite plant. The commission will submit a report to government in this regard," an official release here said.

However, the State government has not issued the formal G.O. in

this regard with the terms of reference of the inquiry commission and the time frame within which it has to submit its report. Since one more person succumbed to police firing on Wednesday in Thoothukudi, the inquiry commission will inquire into this also.

TN sends report to Union Home Ministry
Meanwhile, the State govern-

ment sent a comprehensive report to the Union Home Ministry explaining what happened at Thoothukudi on Tuesday. The Chief Secretary briefed the Union Home Secretary about the police firing, appointment of inquiry commission and the present situation. Earlier, the ministry had sought a detailed report from the Tamil Nadu government on the incident.

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BLACKED OUT AFTER BLACK DAY

Government directs service providers to stop internet services for five days from Wednesday throughout Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari to 'prevent spreading of provocative messages with half truth'; Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation suspends bus services to the volatile district till further orders

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai/Thoothukudi

EVEN as normalcy is yet to be restored in Thoothukudi district after the police firing which claimed many lives, the State government has directed service providers to stop internet services for five days from Wednesday - till May 27 - throughout Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari, "to prevent spreading of provocative messages with half truth." This has been done under Sub-rule (1) of the Rule 2 of the Temporary suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017.

Following this, a section of people of Tamil Nadu will experience the suspension of internet services for the first time, which they know of only through media reports coming from Kashmir. How far this move will affect traders, emergency services and the public will be known in the coming days. Even after the service providers were ordered to stop internet on Wednesday, the service continued to be available at least till 9 pm.

A communication sent by Home Secretary Niranjan Mardi to the nodal officers of internet service providers in the three districts said: A public emergency has arisen which necessitates immediate action and speedy remedy for the public tranquility and it is felt necessary that services of internet should be stopped/curtailed to prevent spreading of such information rumours with half truth.

The letter from the home secretary attributed the gathering of around 20,000 people on May 22 at Thoothukudi to the "information passed via social media." The Home secretary said such a large gathering was possible mainly through the information

passed via social media. Besides, provocative messages were spread in social media with half truth and anti social elements were trying to exploit the situation.

The secretary directed that "Any data related message or class of messages to or from any persons, or relating to any particular subject brought for transmission by or transmitted or received by any telegraph, shall temporarily not be transmitted in the interest of maintaining public order and preventing incitement to the commission of any offence passing through the internet services should be stopped for a period of five days from May 23 to May 27 throughout the districts of Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari."

Bus services suspended
Meanwhile, the Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation (TNSTC) buses temporarily stopped its operation from Madurai Corporation, which comprises Madurai, Theni, Dindigul and Virudhunagar districts. The Madurai Corporation operates 15 services from Madurai, 12 from Tirunelveli and six from Virudhunagar to Thoothukudi. The decision was taken in view of the volatile situation in the district and the promulgation of CrPc section 144.

Speaking to express, TNSTC Madurai Divisional General Manager Raja Sundar said that as per the police instruction, TNSTC stopped the operation to Thoothukudi temporarily. The operation would be resumed once police show the green signal, he added. Meanwhile, private taxi drivers made a killing, fleeing hapless commuters stranded in the wake of the clash. In the town, transport options were little as most vehicles stayed off the roads.

NELLAI ERUPTS IN PROTEST

Tirunelveli: Condemning police firing on Thoothukudi, Sterilite protesters, coastal villagers staged protest at Thomas Mandapam near Kudankulam in Tirunelveli district on Wednesday. Meanwhile, a person climbed up a cell phone tower near Tirunelveli. The protest led to termination of bus services on the ECR.

JACTO-GEO'S CANDLELIGHT VIGIL

Tirunelveli: JACTO-GEO members staged a candlelight vigil at eight places, including Tirunelveli, Alangulam, Sengottai, Sankarankovil, Ambasamudram, Tiruvankadam and Sivagiri to condemn the police action against anti-Sterilite protesters. For the second day, TNSTC did not operate buses to Thoothukudi city.

MSU CANCELS EXAMINATIONS

Tirunelveli: The Manoranmaniam Sundaranar University cancelled its examinations slated from May 23 to May 25 in Thoothukudi district. University Vice Chancellor K Baskar said the all examinations in Thoothukudi district scheduled for May 23, 24 and 25 have been cancelled and postponed.

27 May



RAGING FIRE

A police bus set on fire by protesters at Bryant Nagar in Thoothukudi, where the agitation against the Sterilite plant and police firing continued unabated

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Bishops' Council urges government to hold talks with protesters

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Madurai

CONDEMNING the killing of anti-Sterilite protesters in Thoothukudi, the Tamil Nadu Bishops' Council (TNBC) and Tamil Nadu Latin Bishops' Council (TNLBC) have urged the government to hold talks with the protesters and the locals.

Tamil Nadu Bishops' Council (TNBC) in its statement on Wednesday said that the approach of the State government and the police was condemnable while calling the killing of civilian protesters in Thoothukudi a fascist attitude toward democracy.

The council mentioned that the Centre and the State government show keen interest in protecting the interests of foreign monopolies but consider pleas to protect the environment as an anti-national activity and as an act that impedes national growth. "We also notice a trend in which those who fight to take



Fascist attitude

The council said that the approach of the State was condemnable while calling the killing of civilians showed its fascist attitude

cause to the attention of the government, unarmed are branded as terrorists and separatists. Similarly the self-stimulated anti-Sterilite protests in Thoothukudi has been portrayed as a terrorists' protest. The Council strongly condemns the police who acted as a foreigner to the land when they killed their own people, the protesters," criticised Antony Pappusamy, the Archbishop of Madurai and the President of the Council. The Council extended condolences to the bereaved families while condemning those involved in the atrocious act. It also urged the government to hold talks with the protesters and the locals.

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Kamal Haasan at the Government Hospital in Thoothukudi

FIR against Kamal

Thoothukudi: Thoothukudi police filed an FIR against Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) president Kamal Haasan for visiting the government Thoothukudi hospital by breaching prohibitory orders. Kamal visited the hospital on Wednesday afternoon to console the relatives of the deceased and the injured. The Makkal Needhi Maiam founder demanded closure of the Sterlite plant while seeking strict action against the personnel for opening fire at the protestors and handling the volatile situation in an inefficient manner. Soon after he left the premises, the Thenbaagam police registered an FIR against Kamal and his party functionaries for breaching Section 144 of the CrPC. On April 1,

Stalin visits the injured

Thoothukudi/Chennai: Leader of the Opposition MK Stalin visited the government hospital at Thoothukudi and checked on the injured on Wednesday.

Sources said that the DMK leader consoled the kin of the deceased in the police firing and held talks with injured. Meanwhile, the opposition parties, led by the DMK, are going to stage demonstrations in all district headquarters in Tamil Nadu on Friday condemning the killing of anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi police firing. A statement issued here on Wednesday said the Congress, Dravidar Kazhagam (DK), MDMK, CPM, CPI, VCK and Manithaneya Makkal Katchi (MMK) would take part in the demonstrations. Leaders of these parties, including MK Stalin, Vaiko, K Balakrishnan and R Mutharasan visited the injured persons in Thoothukudi on Wednesday. The visits were in violation of the prohibitory orders.



M K Stalin inquiring with a man injured in the police firing on Tuesday

Embattled GH officials blame mob for delayed rescue effort

C ARUVEL RAJ @ Thoothukudi

A day after the police firing claimed several lives and left many injured, the victims lashed out at the diluted rescue efforts mounted by the government hospital. A number of victims injured in the firing told *Express* that the State-run 108 ambulances attached to the ThMCH failed them in their moment of need. However, refuting the claims, the hospital authorities said that the rescue efforts were hampered as a mob vandalised three ambulances and hijacked one.

Speaking to *Express*, M Anandha Kannan (35), who was shot in the leg, said, "None of the government ambulances came to our aid. When I was taken inside an ambulance run by a private hospital, there were four more gunshot victims inside, bleeding profusely."

Mariammal (38), another victim, told *Express*, "My husband and me were assaulted by the police near the collectorate. We were separated when the stampede began. I was run over by the multitude trying to escape. Even as I was lying on the ground, I saw policemen beating up my husband. An 108 ambulance took my husband away from the spot, but stopped near the collectorate. Finally, a private ambulance came to our rescue."

Meanwhile, authorities of government ambulance service said



Disconsolate relatives of Snowlin, who died in the police firing, at their residence in Thoothukudi on Wednesday

that protesters damaged three out of four ambulances, rendering rescue efforts ineffective. Speaking to *Express*, District Coordinator of 108 ambulance services R Tamilselvan said, "It is unfortunate that we could not serve the victims. During the firing, a rumour spread that 108 vehicles would only carry injured policemen. This led to attacks on

ambulances."

An ambulance driver was assaulted by a mob when he went near the collectorate to rescue the injured.

The authorities claimed that a mob hijacked an ambulance from the government hospital to escape the lathi-charge and abandoned the vehicle near Collectorate.



TARGETED ASSAULT TO QUELL DISSENTING VOICE?

Suspicions of targeted assault rises as four of the 12 shot dead were prominent leaders of the anti-Sterlite movement; demand for CBI probe gets louder

C SHIVAKUMAR @Thoothukudi

movement protesters brush aside this question, DMDK MLA Geetha Jeevan opines the elusive leadership had made it difficult for the administration to negotiate with the protesters. "Had there been a leader, such a situation could be resolved," she said.

The two days of police opening fire at the protesters has definitely succeeded in installing a sense of fear among the protesters. Many of them refused to be named in the newspaper reports.

One of Snowlin's aide alleges that cops used 7.2mm bullet and it was fired from quite a distance. He named the Assistant superintendent of police Selvanagarathnam and said the officer was trying to create trouble during the protests. Selvanagarathnam could not be reached by Express on Wednesday despite several attempts.

Anthonyasmi, who survived the attempt on his life during the protest at Collectorate office as the bullet brushed his arm, says that he ran to safety. Rather than going to hospital, he is taking treatment at home.

Most of the protesters who had joined the protest had lost a close relative due to cancer which is blamed on Sterlite. Mahipa, who is facing wheezing problem, blames Sterlite. She says cancer and breathing-related problems are on rise due to Sterlite. "We lost many of our relatives," she says. While the leadership may have been eliminated, the protest will continue till Sterlite is shut, said a protester on condition of anonymity.

But did the movement have any leaders? While anti-Sterlite

movement protesters brush aside this question, DMDK MLA Geetha Jeevan opines the elusive leadership had made it difficult for the administration to negotiate with the protesters. "Had there been a leader, such a situation could be resolved," she said.

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Senior IAS officer Gagandeep Singh Bedi, who has been appointed as monitoring officer to oversee other works for restoring normalcy in Thoothukudi district, on Wednesday called on those who suffered injuries in the police firing and were being treated at hospital. Another monitoring officer PWC Davidar also met the persons suffered injuries. Both held discussions with district collector and top officials

CC
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Sources

Lack of pressure valve led to tension spilling out

S GODSON WISELY DASS @Thoothukudi

A day after the police firing at anti-Sterlite demonstrators, the public are pointing fingers at the district administration for not spreading awareness on the functioning of the copper smelter nor holding peace talks with the agitators who have been protesting at their respective villages for the past 100 days.

Seconding the claim, a func-

tionary of Federation of Villages against Sterlite Kummardoddiapuram Rajkumar told Express that the district administration did not call them for peace talks even though the issue became state-wide.

"Instead, they chose the wrong path to handle with the agitation. We had informed them about the May 22 protest well in advance through media. They tried to suppress the agitation by registering cases against the

leaders, and had tried to create split among the protesters," he said, adding whenever they stage protest, collector N Venkatesh would just tell them that he would take up the issue with the State government.

Condemning the police firing, he said that the protesters were unarmed. "Our only aim was to lay siege to the collectorate and stage a wait-in protest until the State government comes up with a decision to close down the

unit," he added. Meanwhile, former Tirunelveli MP SS Ramasubbu drew a parallel between the police firing and Jallianwala shooting that happened in 1919. "Even the British forces resorted to firing only at the end," said the former parliamentarian from Tirunelveli who was honored for asking questions in Parliament during his tenure from 2009-14.

"Only dialogue can help resolve the issue. Without spread-

ing awareness and holding peace talks with the protesters, what was the district administration doing all these 100 days? It is unclear why the police opened fire when the protesters went ahead to besiege the collectorate," he added. The former MP recalled that frequent dialogues were being held between officials and those who were protesting against Koodankulam nuclear project though the agitation continued for three years.

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DMDK chief writes to Modi over Sterlite

Chennai: DMDK founder Vijayakant on Wednesday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking the closure of the Sterlite plant in Thoothukudi immediately as it was causing problems to human beings and environment. In his letter to the PM, Vijayakant said people in Thoothukudi had been protesting against the Sterlite plant for the past 100 days, but the District Collector and other government officials had neglected the agitation for the vclosure of the erring unit, he pointed out. As a result, during the May 22 procession in Thoothukudi, police opened fire at the agitators, resulting in loss of lives. Condemning the State and the Centre for acting against the welfare of the people of Tamil Nadu by failing to close down the Sterlite plant, knowing well that the plant was causing a lot of problems, he urged both to take immediate steps to shut the unit.

SHRC seeks report from Collector

Chennai: The State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has called for a detailed report from the government and Thoothukudi Collector on the violence that erupted during the anti-Sterlite protests that claimed 12 lives on Tuesday. The rights body took suo moto cognisance of the matter and directed the State Home Secretary and Thoothukudi Collector to submit the report in three weeks, after which, it said, further action would be taken. The Director-General of Police, Investigation Division, SHRC, has also been asked to investigate the matter and submit a report within six weeks. In the event of any default, the Commission warned that it would 'proceed to take such action as it deems fit and proper.' Meanwhile, expressing solidarity with the anti-Sterlite protesters, Rahul Gandhi blamed the BJP and the RSS for the police firing, which claimed 13 lives.

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HC tells govt to preserve bodies of protesters

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 23

The Madras high court directed state government to preserve the bodies of the 12 persons including a woman and a teenaged girl killed in police firing during the anti-Sterlite protest in Thoothukudi on May 22, until further orders.

A vacation bench comprising Justices T.Ravindran and P.Velmurugan gave the directive while directing government to file its counter affidavit by May 30 on a public interest litigation from advocates S.Jimraj Milton, D. Paarventhan and Paaventhan, which among other things, sought an interim direction to the authorities to appoint a



team of private doctors to conduct the re-postmortem with video recording.

The bench said that advocates shall be permitted to provide necessary legal assistance to the affected persons in accordance with law.

The PIL also sought an

The PIL also sought to restrain police from preventing the team of advocates to conduct legal aid/fact finding at Thoothukudi and nearby affected villages with regard to the people's struggle against Sterlite factory and police firing

inquiry by the principal district and sessions judge, Thoothukudi with regard to sniper shooting by police dressed in civil attire, and direct government to take appropriate action by prosecuting the erring officials including the district collector and superintendent of

police, Thoothukudi, who ordered the police shooting and further direct government to pay compensation to the relatives of the deceased and injured persons with regard to the people's struggle against Sterlite factory and police firing.

The PIL also sought to restrain police from preventing the team of advocates to conduct legal aid/fact finding at Thoothukudi and nearby affected villages with regard to the people's struggle against Sterlite factory and police firing.

The PIL also sought an interim direction to release all arrested/illegal detained persons throughout the state on May 22.

When the PIL came up for hearing, advocate R.Sankarasubbu appearing for the petitioners submitted that Sterlite factory was causing health hazards and polluting the entire district. Therefore, people in the district were agitating for years for closing down the factory. Instead of protecting the people, the state was protecting the industry. Vedanta was ruling the country. All of a sudden, on May 22, the district administration and police in a pre-planned manner, indulged in hunting people. It was not a spontaneous action but a pre-planned action. Except for one girl, all others were leaders of the agitation. Police aimed and shot at vital parts of their

bodies. These were pre-planned murders. Therefore, a sitting district judge should probe the present police firing. Re-post-mortem was also required in the presence of a doctor of the choice of the relatives of the victims, he added.

In response to the allegations made by the petitioners, additional advocate general Narmada Sampath said, "Government is with the people and for the people." All procedures were scrupulously followed. Four magistrates were monitoring the post-mortem. Government has appointed a one man commission and therefore the prayer in the petition has been fulfilled, she added.

One more life lost in fresh police firing

DC CORRESPONDENTS
THOOTHUKUDI/CENNAI,
MAY 23

Police in Thoothukudi opened fire again on Wednesday to control a rioting mob at Anna Nagar, killing Kaliappan, 22, and injuring five others. Police came under attack with stones and petrol bombs, eyewitnesses said.

With 11 falling to police firing on Tuesday, when the anti-Sterlite stir entered the 100th day and the protesters marched to the district collector's office to present demand for permanent closure of the copper smelter unit alleging it was polluting environment and groundwater, Kaliappan's death now has taken the toll in the unfortunate and avoidable tragedy to 12.

While the conflict seemed set for a prolonged showdown between the State and the protesters, who appear to be backed by a well-organised network of activists and Tamil fringe groups, the flare-up is also spreading to other parts of Tamil Nadu and adjacent Puducherry.

The Madurai bench of the Madras high court on Wednesday ordered stay of the Sterlite expansion work and asked the Centre to submit a report within four months after holding a public hearing in Thoothukudi. The significant court order was hailed by the protesters as their 'first victory' but considering that they are now divided among different groups, their agitation is likely to go on unless the government quickly takes up damage-controlling exercises to assuage public fears while handling the law-breakers with firmness.

The government has ordered revamp of the district administration bringing in a new collector and SP, besides sending two

HC STAYS **STERLITE EXPANSION**



Police personnel lathicharge at a protester demanding the closure of Vedanta's Sterlite Copper unit in Tuticorin on Wednesday. — PTI

The Madurai bench of the Madras high court on Wednesday stayed **Sterlite Copper's expansion** in Thoothukudi

The National Human Rights Commission has sent a notice to the Tamil Nadu's chief secretary and police chief over the killing of 10 people in police firing

The Madras high court directed state government to preserve the bodies of the 12 persons including a woman and a teenaged girl killed in police firing

SHARES OF VEDANTA FELL 6% ON REPORTS THAT POLICE KILLED PROTESTERS DEMANDING STERLITE CLOSURE

**MORE ON
PG 4 & 5**

seasoned IAS officials, agriculture secretary Gagandeep Singh Bedi and transport secretary PWC Dawidar, to oversee the much-needed healing/firming up process as the 'monitoring officers'.

Tamils in London staged protest outside the residence of Vedanta Group chairman Anil Agarwal, waving placards and demanding closure of his Sterlite unit in Thoothukudi. The Vedanta shares dropped by six per cent in the Indian share market.

The company's woes seem worsening with the state government making clear it was keen on the closure of the Thoothukudi factory, which was established way back in 1993.

● **Tamils in London staged protest outside the residence of Vedanta Group chairman Anil Agarwal, waving placards and demanding closure of his Sterlite unit in Thoothukudi**

Collector, SP shifted out of Thoothukudi

Chennai: A day after the brutal police firing killed 11 persons for protesting against Sterlite Copper in Thoothukudi, the government shunted out district collector N.Venkatesh and Superintendent of Police P. Mahendran on Wednesday.

In an order, Chief Secretary Girija Vaidyanathan appointed Sandeep Nanduri, currently the collector of Tirunelveli district, as the collector of Thoothukudi district. N. Venkatesh has been transferred and posted as additional state project director for implementation of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan. In a separate order, home secretary Niranjan Mardi transferred P. Mahendran and posted him as deputy commissioner of police (Traffic-North), Greater Chennai Police. SP of Nilgiris district, Murali Rambha, is the new SP of Thoothukudi.

Rajini slams govt over Sterlite deaths

Chennai: Tamil film 'superstar' Rajinikanth has lashed out at the Tamil Nadu government for Tuesday's police firing and said this only indicated the "failure of the state and police brutality."

Reacting to the incident, the actor-turned politician said in a video posted on his Twitter account: "I condemn the carelessness of the government, failure of the state machinery and the police brutality in the Sterlite protests. My sincere condolences to the families of the deceased."

"This government's inaction and their indifference towards sentiments of people has resulted in the loss of lives due to gunfire. I'm deeply saddened, and this is a condemnable act. Tamil Nadu government is solely responsible for the violence and deaths," he had tweeted.

INTERNET CONNECTION SUSPENDED IN 3 DISTRICTS

C.S. KOTTESWARAN | DC
CHENNAI, MAY 23

As a precautionary measure and to prevent the spread of Thoothukudi violence to adjacent districts of Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari, the state home secretary Niranjani Mardi on Wednesday passed government orders to the all nodal officers of Internet service providers directing them to suspend the internet connections in the three districts.

The order said the state received information that about 20,000 people had convened due to the spread of messages in social media and there was information that videos instigating people with half-truths were being spread via social media aimed to disturb the public peace. Invoking the public safety and emergency rules 2017, the government now directed the private telecom sectors to suspend Internet connection from May 23 to 27.

Meanwhile there were also reports of cable TVs being disconnected and news items related to the Sterlite stir blacked out in several parts in south TN.

Needless to say, the suspension of Internet has caused concern among the people in the three southern districts, already distressed over the happenings over the last few days in the police action on anti-Sterlite protesters.

"This is reminding us of the Emergency period. How will the people there access their bank accounts and book railway tickets?" asked T Sadagoppan, president, Tamil Nadu Progressive Consumer Forum.

In the government side, it could be argued that the order to suspend the Net during this incendiary period is justified. Consider this: a video of a woman TV actor called Nilani abusing the police for firing on 'peaceful' protesters in Thoothukudi and calling for a statewide 'revolt' to bring down 'this spineless government', has gone viral. The actor was in a police uniform for her role in a serial (Tamarai) in a Tamil channel and



Nilani in her TV dress says she is ashamed of wearing the uniform.

pointing to the dress, Nilani tells the viewer she is "ashamed of being seen in the police dress".

And here is the punchline in this disturbing narrative: This highly provocative video, which can easily be termed as hugely derogatory to the policemen doing their bit to restore order in trying circumstances - torn between political considerations - was circulated on social media in Thoothukudi and neighbourhood as being done by a 'real' police officer ashamed of her job and the uniform.

A man in Vadapalani complained to the police saying he was shocked by the video instigating revolt against the State and denigrating the police. The Vadapalani police have registered a case under various sections, including the IT Act. "We are trying to locate the woman in the video", said Inspector Chandru of the Vadapalani police station.

Needless to say, Niranjani Mardi had no other option but to sign that order.

TRADERS JOIN PROTEST BACKING AGITATORS

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 23

While Thoothukudi was on boil for the second consecutive day the anti-Sterlite protests snowballed into violent agitations across Tamil Nadu.

Traders' association announced statewide bandh in the district on Wednesday. Chennai also witnessed agitations near state secretariat, parry's Corner with lawyers and students jumping in to protests.

Gagandeep, Dawidar to help restore peace

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 23

After messing up the anti-Sterlite protests resulting in unprecedented violence and killing of dozen people in the shoot out, the state government on Wednesday shunted out district collector N. Venkatesh and district superintendent of police P. Mahendran.

The government also dispatched two top IAS officers Gagandeep Singh Bedi and P W C Dawidar to restore peace in the violence hit Pearl City of TN.

“Bedi, who is also the state agricultural secretary, has been a crisis manager for the various governments during tsunami, cyclone Thaane and flash floods in 2005 and 2015 and is good with his public relation skills. Bedi will

deal with victims and visit hospitals to speed up the treatment for the injured while Dawidar, who is the state transport secretary, is a straight forward officer known for his administrative skills and he is expected to restore infrastructure and ensure that the water and food is supplied for those on relief measures,” said an informed official in the secretariat.

The decision to shunt out the collector and SP was taken last night by Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami and the shoot-out incident has personally upset the CM and his senior cabinet colleagues.

Meanwhile, state government and the Raj Bhavan also cancelled a few official functions scheduled till Wednesday.

■ 'Bullets of Modi will never be able to crush Tamil sentiments'

Rahul: Tamils massacred as they don't bow to RSS

J V SIVA PRASANNA
KUMAR | DC
CHENNAI, MAY 23

"The Tamil are being massacred because they refuse to bow down to the RSS ideology", declared Congress President Rahul Gandhi in a tweet on Monday that was significantly in Tamil.

Fishing merrily in the troubled Thoothukudi waters, he said, "The bullets of RSS and Modi would never be able to crush the Tamil's sentiments. Tamil brothers and sisters, we are with you #SterliteProtest".

Again, in his tweet on Tuesday-this one was in English for the larger audience-Rahul called the police firing in Thoothukudi as "a brutal example of state spon-



sored terrorism."

"These citizens were murdered for protesting against injustice," he said.

Retorting, RSS joint general secretary Dr Manmohan Vaidya called Rahul's tweets as "irresponsible utterances" and said the "frustrated Congress and its



President, Rahul Gandhi are trying to create more divisions in the society to regain their lost support". He claimed that the RSS "is tirelessly working for unifying the people of Bharat rising above the caste, regional and religious identities to work in the interest of the nation".

CHIDAMBARAM SHOULD SPEAK UP, SAYS SWAMY

Meanwhile, BJP MP Dr Subramanian Swamy taunted former Union minister P. Chidambaram to "speak up" on behalf of Sterlite. In a tweet he said, "Now that the Madras high court is hearing the Sterlite issue, Chidambaram should appear for the company because earlier he was a paid Director for Vedanta. Emoluments included payment for evening "entertainment."



AGAINST FIRING

Communist party CPI(M) cadres stage a road roko in front of Valluvar Kottam against Sterlite factory firing incidents on Wednesday.

— DC

BJP sees foreign conspiracy angle to T'kudi incidents

**J.V. SIVA PRASANNA
KUMAR | DC**
CHENNAI, MAY 23

The BJP has demanded the enquiry commission appointed by the TN government to probe into the Thoothukudi violence, to look into the "foreign conspiracy" angle and identify the "force" that had incited violence on Tuesday leading to the police firing.

"The Thoothukudi deaths following police firing is regrettable. Public grievance cannot be addressed on the streets. When the matter is in court, why should the innocent people be instigated to agitate and lose their lives. The opposition parties shouldn't settle political scores on human lives," BJP State president Dr. Tamilsai Soundararajan has said reacting to the violent incidents in the southern coastal town.

"The forces behind the incidents need to be probed in depth to find any foreign conspiracy to disturb peace in Tamil Nadu," she insisted.

Describing the loss of lives due to police firing as "unfortunate" Union Minister of State for Finance and Shipping Pon Radhakrishnan said the loss of lives could have been prevented had the copper smelter plant been closed down long ago. "However, the reason for the agitation to prolong for such a long period should be probed and appropriate ¹⁰⁵ action taken," he said.

DMK, allies to stage protest tomorrow

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 23

DMK working president M. K. Stalin who rushed to Thoothukudi to see the injured and meet the families of 11 people killed in police firing demanded the resignation of Chief Minister and DGP T. K. Rajendran, over the anti-Sterlite violence. Also, DMK and allies announced agitation on May 25 on the issue.

Mr Palaniswami and Rajendran should own moral responsibility for the incident and resign, the DMK leader who cancelled his programme to attend the swearing-in ceremony of H. D.



Kumaraswamy as Chief Minister of Karnataka on Wednesday, in order to visit the families of the deceased in southern coastal town, said.

Speaking to reporters at the airport here on

Stalin shot back at Jayakumar, "so many lives have been sacrificed. No preventive measures were in place. They know that rally will take place"

Wednesday, he sought to know why the CM had not sent the local ministers to visit the affected spot and engage the protesters in peace talks. When asked to comment on fisheries minister D. Jayakumar justifying the police firing, Mr. Stalin shot back, "so many lives have been sacrificed. No preventive measures were in place.

They know that rally will take place." He also sought to know who had ordered police firing on the peaceful protesters.

Meanwhile, the DMK and allies will stage a massive protest demonstration in front of all district headquarters on May 25 to condemn police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters and also demanding permanent closure of the Sterlite's copper smelter plant. Apart from DMK, its allies Congress and IUML, leaders of friendly parties like MDMK, VCK, CPI, CPI (M), Dravidar Kazhagam and Manithaneya Makkal Katchi would take part in the demonstration.

HC tells govt to preserve bodies of protesters

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 23

The Madras high court directed state government to preserve the bodies of the 12 persons including a woman and a teenaged girl killed in police firing during the anti-Sterlite protest in Thoothukudi on May 22, until further orders.

A vacation bench comprising Justices T.Ravindran and P.Velmurugan gave the directive while directing government to file its counter affidavit by May 30 on a public interest litigation from advocates S.Jimraj Milton, D. Paarventhan and Paaventhan, which among other things, sought an interim direction to the authorities to appoint a



team of private doctors to conduct the re-postmortem with video recording.

The bench said that advocates shall be permitted to provide necessary legal assistance to the affected persons in accordance with law.

The PIL also sought an

The PIL also sought to restrain police from preventing the team of advocates to conduct legal aid/fact finding at Thoothukudi and nearby affected villages with regard to the people's struggle against Sterlite factory and police firing

inquiry by the principal district and sessions judge, Thoothukudi with regard to sniper shooting by police dressed in civil attire, and direct government to take appropriate action by prosecuting the erring officials including the district collector and superintendent of

police, Thoothukudi, who ordered the police shooting and further direct government to pay compensation to the relatives of the deceased and injured persons with regard to the people's struggle against Sterlite factory and police firing.

The PIL also sought to restrain police from preventing the team of advocates to conduct legal aid/fact finding at Thoothukudi and nearby affected villages with regard to the people's struggle against Sterlite factory and police firing.

The PIL also sought an interim direction to release all arrested/illegally detained persons throughout the state on May 22.

When the PIL came up for hearing, advocate R.Sankarasubbu appearing for the petitioners submitted that Sterlite factory was causing health hazards and polluting the entire district. Therefore, people in the district were agitating for years for closing down the factory. Instead of protecting the people, the state was protecting the industry. Vedanta was ruling the country. All of a sudden, on May 22, the district administration and police in a pre-planned manner, indulged in hunting people. It was not a spontaneous action but a pre-planned action. Except for one girl, all others were leaders of the agitation. Police aimed and shot at vital parts of their

bodies. These were pre-planned murders. Therefore, a sitting district judge should probe the present police firing. Re-postmortem was also required in the presence of a doctor of the choice of the relatives of the victims, he added.

In response to the allegations made by the petitioners, additional advocate general Narmada Sampath said, "Government is with the people and for the people." All procedures were scrupulously followed. Four magistrates were monitoring the post-mortem. Government has appointed a one man commission and therefore the prayer in the petition has been fulfilled, she added.

317 held in city for protesting against Thoothukudi shootings

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 23

As many as 317 persons including 33 women were detained and released later in Chennai for blocking roads in the city. The protestors blocked roads at 31 locations condemning the police shoot-out and killing of 12 persons in Thoothukudi.

According to the police, a total of 2093 men and 152 women participated in the protests in the city. DMK MLAs KPP Samy and S. Sudharsanam also took part in the protests conducted in Tiruvottiyur and Kasimedu.

● **City police have increased their vigil at all the fishermen hamlet from Ennore to Kanathur**

Meanwhile, DGP T.K. Rajendran also propped the police superintendents of all the districts to beef up the security.

The directions also have been issued to city police commissioners to increase vigil, the police sources said.

The sources also added that the DGP office has issued orders to amplify the security arrangements and police deployments on coastal

villages in the state and directed them to keep round the clock vigil. "The higher officials also directed to take severe actions against those who instigate protests. Tight security will be in place until the tension is alleviated," sources added.

In the meantime, the police department, anticipating the protests in Chennai, has deployed thousands of police personnel in various spots in the city such as Marina beach, DGP office, Chennai collector Office.

"Chennai police have increased their vigil at all the fishermen hamlet from Ennore to Kanathur," sources said.

NHRC notice to chief secretary, DGP

New Delhi: The National Human Rights Commission has sent a notice to the Tamil Nadu's chief secretary and police chief over the killing of 10 people in police firing during anti-Sterlite protest in Thoothukudi.

Violence broke out yesterday during protest demanding the closure of Vedanta group's Sterlite Copper plant over pollution concerns with police opening fire, resulting in the death of 10 people. The overnight tensions spilled over to this morning.

"Reportedly, the protesters attacked the collectorate building and the police personnel posted there, leaving a few cops injured and some vehicles burnt. Thereafter, the police retaliated with firing. The fleeing protesters were reportedly chased down and beaten up by the

police," the NHRC on Wednesday said in a statement. The rights panel said it has issued notices to the chief secretary and the director general of police seeking detailed reports in two weeks, along with the status of those who are being treated for injuries.

"The commission expects that investigation into the matter will be conducted as per guidelines laid down in its letter dated May 12, 2010, addressed by the chairperson, NHRC to the chief ministers of all states," it said.

The NHRC has also observed that going by the contents of the media reports, "it appears that the authorities probably failed to foresee the tragic violence which took place".

— PTI

132 arrested for riots in Thoothukudi

DC CORRESPONDENT
THOOTHUKUDI MAY 23

Police picked up 132 men in connection with the Thoothukudi riots on May 22 and 23, according to Thoothukudi district police superintendent P. Mahendran.

Issuing a statement on Wednesday, the Thoothukudi SP stated that the violent mob indulged in large-scale violence on May 22, pelting stones, hurling petrol bombs at several government buildings and setting ablaze 127 government and private vehicles. In the police action taken to control the rioters, 10 were killed.

Police picked up 65 men who led the riot.

On the second day of the riot, according to police, the rioters set ablaze two

police buses, two vehicles belonging to the agriculture department and a private vehicle. The rioters also damaged CCTV cameras fitted at Bryant nagar and Annanagar.

To control this, police fired rubber bullets in which a youth was killed. In connection with the second day violence, police picked up 67 men, who along with the 65 picked up on the previous day, are likely to be remanded, said the Thoothukudi police superintendent.

Senior advocate Chandrasekar filed a petition at the Thoothukudi district chief judicial magistrate complaining that police had kept 96 men in wrongful custody at the Vallanad police shooting range without registering any case.

MHA asks TN govt to provide details

New Delhi: The Centre on Wednesday asked the Tamil Nadu government to provide details of the incident at Thoothukudi where nine people were killed in police firing during protest demanding the closure of Vedanta group's Sterlite Copper plant over pollution concerns, officials said.

Union home ministry officials said the ministry is in touch with the state government over the developments in the port town in the southern state. The home ministry has asked the state govern-

● **Union home ministry is in touch with the state govt over the matter**

ment to provide details of the incident at Thoothukudi, an official said. Ten people were killed in police firing Tuesday after protests for the closure of Sterlite Copper plant over pollution concerns turned violent. The protests were going on in Thoothukudi for over three months, but violence erupted yesterday with agitators fighting pitched battles with police. —PTI

ANUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN

DECCAN CHRONICLE

Film celebs are often accused of using their social media account for commercial purposes to promote their movies or events. However, from Jallikattu protest of 2017 to the Cauvery issue, they have been posting messages for a cause on their twitter and Facebook handles, proving they too are socially conscious people.

They have raised their voices in unison at the killing of innocents in the police firing in Thoothukudi on the 100th day of anti-Sterlite protests. Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan, who have already entered the political arena, came out with the strongest views against the government in the issue, speaking without mincing words. Kamal also visited the hospital to console those who were injured in the police firing.

Other top actors and actresses also registered their views through their social media handles. In an unfortunate turn of events, the top stunt master Sliva, known for his work in Tamil cinema, lost his brother-in-law J. Selvaraj to police firing. He took to his twitter handle to express his emotions. "With profound grief, I share that I lost my b-in-law Selvaraj to this ghastly police firing in Tuticorin."

In a strongly worded statement, Vishal said, "I strongly condemn the brutal killing of innocent lives during the ongoing Sterlite protest in Tuticorin. My deepest condolences! The protest is done for a social cause not for personal goals. If 50,000 ppl are protesting against Sterlite, it means there is unity among ppl to stop something, which is against the welfare of the people of Tuticorin."

He asked PM to break his silence. "Dear Prime Minister, please break your silence at least now. As BJP says, Protest is a form of Democracy, why can't people do the same. Government is supposed to be "For The People" & not otherwise 2019 please be aware!!!"

Suriya in said in statement, "People have been fighting



Celebs condemn government

HOW DARE THEY SHOOT AT PEOPLE?

Police action to fire directly at people seemed excessive and TN's film celebrities stand united in condemning the deaths from firing



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Suriya in said in statement, "People have been fighting



against these Sterlite factories, which has been causing severe health hazards for the last 25 years and not of late. It is a project rejected by Maharashtra government because of its health risks and why would Tamil Nadu government accept it? If people come to the streets and protest, why can't the government gives a patient hear-

ing? By taking advantage of law and power in hand, they should not act against them. After all, they are fighting for their livelihood and not for anything else. We strongly condemn the violent act by police and deeply saddened for those who perished fighting for the cause." His sibling Karthi also expressed similar views through a statement.



SENTIMENTS

The sentiments of the people who fight against Sterlite should be respected. They should receive justice. People who are responsible for this incident should be censured and punished. I express my deepest condolences to the bereaved families who have lost their dear ones.



— Dhanush

Saddened and I am angered.

After all, they are fighting for the well-being of all the people. My deepest condolences to the families who have lost their loved ones.



— Vijay Sethupathi

The TN government will call for a commission to inquire the deaths in Sterlite protests and escape because that inquiry will go on forever and ever and the government will find another issue to talk about, forgetting all about this. The only ones who will live with the pain are the families of the dead.



— Actress turned politician Khusbu Sundar

'Corporates more evil than imagined'

>> *Continued from Page 17*

Some Corporates are more evil than we can imagine!!"

GV Prakash shares his anguish on the shocking incident. "It was an inhuman brutal act against common people who have been fighting for a cause. Who gave them to authority to shoot at people? I strongly condemn this and the government and police should answer for this ruthless act."

RJ Balaji has posted, "What happened in Thoothukudi is absolute shock. Shooting of innocent people by police is such a shame. Some of our own lost their lives. Sad to see people peaceful protests ending in violence because of fringe elements. God be little more kind to Thoothukudi and all of us in Tamil Nadu."

Director **Karthik Subbaraj**, whose movie *Mercury* dealt with environmental pollution and mercury poisoning, has tweeted and expressed his sadness over the Tuticorin Sterlite issue. He wrote, "Shocking n Horrible!!... Feeling really sad for innocent people shot dead by the Police... Really scary about our Rulers and their governance &



Arvind swamy said, "Deeply saddened to hear about the death of protesters in Tuticorin. My condolences to the families and those affected."

Kalaiyarasan in his tweet posted, "Badly upset n extremely angry on seeing the things happening. Always the normal people get affected n killed for all the issues. People on the top are always safe. Left without words to express the pain going through. Worried not able to do anything."

Lakshmi Ramakrishnan took to her twitter and wrote, "Unfortunate, prayers for the families. Hope justice prevails, innocent people getting killed, not able to digest, totally devastating!"

She also added, "Original protesters whose demands are genuine say they never indulged in violence & they will continue peaceful protests!!! Then, who pelted stones on police & set fire to their vehicles? A rightful, peaceful protest was damaged and diverted? So many innocent people affected!!"

Varalaxmi Sarathkumar was shocked to hear what happened. "The whole idea of a peaceful protest is to ensure that no one gets hurt and yet so much violence.. Innocent people shot. Shame on TN government! It's truly a black day. Prayers and strength to the families of the victims. Change needed."

Each and every bullet in the chests of dead protestors will come back to haunt this sham of a government in Tamil Nadu. Deepest condolences and prayers for the murdered innocents and their families! What a dark day in our history!



NATION, CURRENT AFFAIRS

Stop acting: Policeman told dying anti-Sterlite protestor in Tuticorin

DECCAN CHRONICLE.

Published May 24, 2018, 11:37 am IST

Updated May 24, 2018, 12:04 pm IST

At least 12 people have died during the anti-Sterlite protest in Tamil Nadu's Tuticorin.



Protesters are demanding that Sterlite's copper smelting plant be shut down because it is contaminating the air and water of the region. (Photo: Screengrab/Twitter)

Tuticorin: As fresh violence erupted at the site of anti-Sterlite protest in Tuticorin on Wednesday, a video has emerged showing inhuman reaction of the police as a young man lay dying on the ground.

In the video, 22-year-old Kaliappan can be seen lying on the

ground with policemen surrounding him. As he moves his head a little, one of the policemen prods him with a stick and says, “Stop acting”.

Kaliappan was among the hundreds protesting against a Sterlite plant at

Tamil Nadu's Tuticorin. He died of his gunshot wounds soon after.

He was declared dead when he was brought to the government hospital in Thoothukudi.

Following Kaliappan’s death, the toll in the unfortunate and avoidable tragedy has risen to 12.

On Wednesday, the Tamil Nadu government ordered suspension of internet services in Tuticorin and adjoining districts of Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari for five days to prevent spread of rumours through social media and help bring public tranquility.

Read: [After fresh violence, internet services suspended in Tuticorin, top cop shifted](#)

The government also transferred district collector N Venkatesh and Superintendent of Police P Mahendran on Wednesday.

Tirunelveli District collector, Sandeep Nanduri has been appointed as Tuticorin district, an official release said.

Nilgiris District SP Murali Rambha will replace P Mahendran.

A video released by news agency ANI on Wednesday taking aim from the top of a bus and then a voice from the background makes a shocking statement: "At least one should die".

Also Read: [Video of anti-Sterlite protest shows cop saying 'at least 1 should die'](#)

The killings of protestors have evoked a sharp response from the opposition with MDMK founder likening it to Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

Also Read: [Tamilians murdered for refusing RSS ideals: Rahul on anti-Sterlite killings](#)

The protesters are demanding that Sterlite's copper smelting plant be shut down as it is polluting the air and water of the region

After fresh violence, internet services suspended in Tuticorin, top cop shifted

DECCAN CHRONICLE / PTI

Published May 24, 2018, 8:36 am IST

Updated May 24, 2018, 10:26 am IST

Internet services in Tuticorin, adjoining Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari has been suspended for 5 days.

12 people have died in anti-Sterlite protests in Tamil Nadu's Tuticorin. (Photo: AFP)

Chennai: The Tamil Nadu government on Wednesday ordered suspension of internet services in Tuticorin and adjoining districts of Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari for five days to prevent spread of rumours through social media and help bring public tranquility.

The government also transferred district collector N

Venkatesh and Superintendent of Police P Mahendran on Wednesday.

Tirunelveli District collector, Sandeep Nanduri has been appointed as

Tuticorin district, an official release said.

Nilgiris District SP Murali Rambha will replace P Mahendran.

Blaming provocative messages spread through social media, the government in an order said such messages led to a massive gathering of about 20,000 people on Tuesday in Tuticorin against Sterlite's copper plant which subsequently resulted in violence and police action.

Noting that anti-social elements were trying to exploit the situation, the government directed nodal officers of Internet Service Providers in these three districts to suspend internet services till May 27 effective from Wednesday.

Citing a communique in this respect from the Director General of Police, the order said "it is felt necessary that the services of internet should be stopped/curtailed to prevent

spread of such rumours."

With 11 falling to police firing on Tuesday, when the anti-Sterlite stir entered the 100th day and the protesters marched to the district collector's office to present demand for permanent closure of the copper smelter unit alleging it was polluting environment and groundwater, one more death on Wednesday has now taken the toll in the unfortunate and avoidable tragedy to 12.

Security stepped up after Sterlite protests

DC CORRESPONDENT
COIMBATORE, MAY 23

Security was stepped up at sensitive points in the city on Wednesday following the Thoothukudi Sterlite protest violence.

Police protection was tightened at VOC Park ground where a massive protest for the conduct of jallikattu was held last year.

Police personnel were deployed at Race course, Codissia ground near Peelamedu. Police also barricaded the front and rear entrance of VOC Park on Tuesday night as a precautionary measure.

On Wednesday, four youth arrived at the VOC Park ground and staged a

protest by raising slogans condemning the shootout on 11 at the port town and demanded the closure of Sterlite copper plant.

They were identified as Niyas, Sabeen, Sadam Husain and Sadiq Batcha from Ukkadam were handed over to Race course police. A complaint was lodged against them and they were released within a few minutes.

In a similar protest, Annur police arrested 24 youths belong to DYFI for staging a road roko on Wednesday condemning the Tuticorin police firing.

Around 100 cadres belong to CPI (M) staged a protest near Gandhipuram on Wednesday condemning the same.



Condemning the shootout at Thoothukudi, cadres of CPI (M) stage a protest near Gandhipuram in Coimbatore on Wednesday. —DC



PROTESTS IN MADURAI

All party members stage a road roko near Periyar bus stand in Madurai on Wednesday, protesting against police firing in Thoothukudi.

—DC

Protests in Thanjai in wake of Thoothukudi firing

Thanjavur: Protest demonstrations continued here on Wednesday condemning the police firing at Thoothukudi on Tuesday. Transport employees associations held a demonstration at old bus stand. CPI members staged a demonstration at railway station. Agitators demanded resignation of Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami owning moral responsibility and a judicial probe into the police firing.



Aruna Jagadeesan

Retd judge to head inquiry commission

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 23

Tamil Nadu government on Wednesday appointed Commission of Inquiry headed by retired Judge Aruna Jagadeesan to go into Thoothukudi violence. The appointment of the retire judge resulted in controversy broke with the opposition parties and netizens crying foul over the appointment.

Madras High Court advocate M. Radhakrishnan, a counsel for Fathima, a petitioner in a case against Sterlite Industries, said the assault against the anti-Sterlite protestors was unprecedented. Never in the history, such a gruesome shoot out took place in Tamil Nadu.

He said the appointment of Justice Aruna Jagadeesan comes as shocker to every one. The probe must be conducted only by sitting judge of the Madras High court and not by a retired judge of the court. Even now it is not clear who gave the shoot out order. Only a sitting judge can act in an independent manner to bring out truth behind shoot out

The timeline for investigating this case has not been fixed and already the same judge gave a clean chit to the police who were involved in the infamous velachery shoot out killing five north Indians, said another madras High Court lawyer wishing not to be quoted.

It may be recalled that justice Aruna Jagadeesan courted controversy after the bech she was part of gave a clean chit to the Chennai city police in February 2015, for alleged fake encounters in Velachery that killed five men suspected of bank robbery. A plea for a CBI probe into the matter was also dismissed by the Madras HC.

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Internet suspended for five days in three southern districts

TNN | May 24, 2018, 12.44 PM IST



With Tuticorin continuing to remain tense on Wednesday, the state government suspended internet services in the neighbouring districts of Tuticorin, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari for five days from Wednesday evening. The government has directed internet service providers to stall data connectivity till May 27.

The state government took the step following advice from the Centre when union home secretary Rajiv Gauba spoke to Tamil Nadu chief secretary Girija Vaidyanathan to ascertain the ground situation in Tuticorin.

“During the interaction, the union home secretary suggested that the state suspend internet services in the troubled region to prevent spread of rumours and false alerts through social media until the situation is brought

under control and the state agreed to do so,” a source in the Tamil Nadu government told TOI.

Additional chief secretary to Tamil Nadu government Niranjan Mardi, in charge of the home department, in a communication to nodal officers of all internet service providers recalled the death of “some people in police action” during protests against Sterlite factory at Tuticorin on May 22 when around 20,000 people, mobilised mainly through social media, had engaged in violence.

“Provocative messages are being spread on social media and antisocial elements are trying to exploit the situation,” he said.

“A public emergency has arisen which necessitates immediate action and speedy remedy for public peace and it was felt necessary that internet services be stopped to prevent spreading of such rumours,” the government communiqué said.

“The internet services for mobile devices have been cut for now,” an employee with a private telecom company said.

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Death toll rises to 13 in Tuticorin police firing

TNN | May 24, 2018, 12.26 PM IST



MADURAI: The death toll in Tuticorin's anti-Sterlite protest rose to 13 on Thursday with Selvasekar, 42 of Sawyerpuram, succumbing to injuries at the Tuticorin government hospital.

Security at the government hospital in Tuticorin was tight and the situation continued to be tense. About 200 police personnel has been stationed there, including senior IPS officers.

Read also: [Police firing killed 796 civilians in 6 years](#)

Sources said postmortem examination had been performed on two of the 13 bodies, as only three families of the deceased persons were present for inquest, as rules mandate.

The families of ten other victims have not arrived at the hospital, some of them angry with the system and the others keeping away due to local pressure. On Wednesday, the Madras high court had ordered that 11 bodies be preserved until further orders.

Meanwhile, former Tirunelveli District Collector, Sandeep Nanduri took charge as new Tuticorin District Collector.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Restoring normalcy in Tuticorin priority, says new collector

TNN | May 24, 2018, 02:18 PM IST



MADURAI: Former Tirunelveli district collector Sandeep Nanduri assumed charge as district collector of violence-ravaged Tuticorin on Thursday and said restoring normalcy at the earliest would be his priority.

Speaking to reporters soon after assuming office, the new collector said the government had asked him and newly-appointed Superintendent of Police Murali Ramba to assume charge immediately. "It is a big responsibility, which the government has entrusted with the new SP, myself and other officials. It shows the faith it has in us," Nanduri said.

He assured the reporters of regular interactions, as he felt that the two way communication between the masses and the officers, and vice versa played an important role in the restoration process and the media would be the important bridge between the two.

When pointed out that there was acute shortage of food and water in many places, including the government hospital where the patients and their attenders were facing difficulties, he said steps were being taken to ensure food supplies at the earliest and that he would visit the government hospital soon.

Asked who gave the firing orders which led to many people being killed on Tuesday, he said that it would be inappropriate for him to comment on the issue. "The government has appointed a senior judge and we will have to wait for the report for a clear picture," he said.

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Tuticorin sterlite protests: When innocents came in the line of fire and dropped dead

TNN | May 24, 2018, 01.20 PM IST



TUTICORIN: Among the victims of Tuesday's police firing at anti-Sterlite protesters in Tuticorin were not just protesters, but innocent passersby who unwittingly came in the line of fire. Antony Selvaraj, 46 of Annai Veilankanni Nagar, was one such hapless person who lost his life while coming out of his office.

Selvaraj was employed in a shipping firm at Teacher's Colony near Third Mile, a few hundred metres from the collectorate where the police opened fire. His daughter Jennifer had attained puberty and the family was busy preparing for a function in this connection. He had told his wife in the morning that he would pick her from her office and together they would go to invite friends and relatives. However, fate willed otherwise and Selvaraj was shot dead.

L Prabhu, 36, a fisherman of Therespuram, must thank his lucky stars to be alive after taking a bullet in his triceps. He had already lost his right hand which had to be amputated after a cracker blast four years ago. On Tuesday, he had gone to the collectorate only as a spectator when the firing started and he ran for cover. Police were lathicharging and he did not know that he had taken a bullet. "I only thought it was a lathi impact that I sustained. The bullet was fired from behind and I had got it on my triceps. I ran to my house and it was only then that my sister L Anitha saw blood oozing from the gunshot wound,"he told TOI.

Cousins Priyanka and Anitha took him to the government medical college hospital. However, the hospital authorities could not

admit him as there was heavy rush and he had to spend the night on painkillers. He returned to the hospital at 11 am on Wednesday when the bullet was pulled out surgically. Sasu Anand, 27, of Theraspuram was also injured in the firing at Theraspuram with bullets piercing his neck on the left as well as left thigh. Suyambu Lingam, his friend, says Sasu is lucky to have evaded a bullet fired at his head. Muthukamar, 23, who works in a finance company at Tuticorin had bullet injuries on his right hand and left leg. The bullets were retrieved surgically.

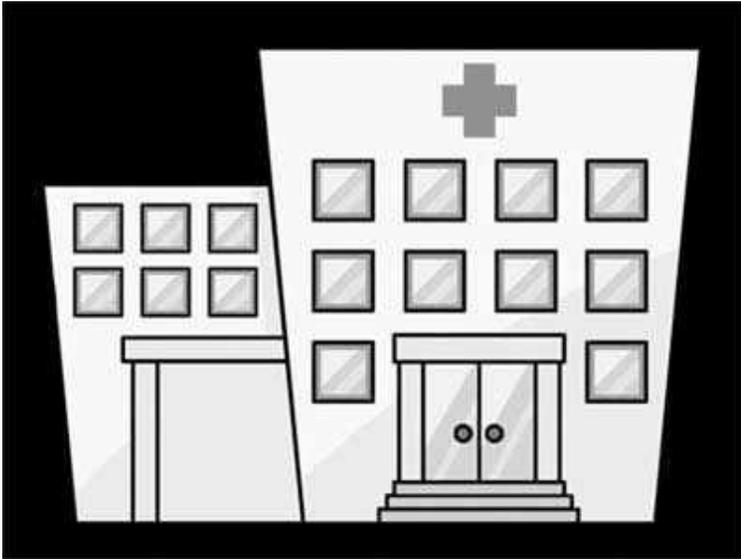
Also among the protesters who died in the firing was S Maniraj, 25, who had got married to Petchiammal only three months ago. He owns an electrical shop and has been part of the anti-Sterlite protest all through the 100 days. During the protest, he sustained bullet injuries and died on Tuesday evening leaving his pregnant wife inconsolable. C Julie, 40, a widow who was among the protesters who marched to the collectorate said, "I am a homemaker and mother of two children who are in Classes IX and IV. I joined the protest on the eighth day after my husband died. The protest was a silent exercise from our part. The government and police cornered us at the collectorate and killed our brothers and sisters," she said.

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26 riot victims undergo surgery for bullet injuries

TNN | May 24, 2018, 12.46 AM IST



TUTICORIN: Twenty-six riot victims who suffered bullet injuries and fractures underwent surgery in Tuticorin Medical College and Hospital till Wednesday afternoon. “The condition of all is stable. We have brought 30 surgeons from various specialities from the Tirunelveli Medical College and Hospital and Government Rajaji Hospital,” director of medical education (DME) A Edwin Joe told TOI.

This is in addition to the 80 doctors from the hospital here and nearly 250 nurses and paramedics who have been dedicated to attend to riot victims.

“Those who have been operated upon include those from whom bullets were retrieved and those who had suffered fractures,” he said and added that they have not taken stock of the number of persons who suffered

bullet injuries as focus was to treat them.

“The hospital is equipped to treat those who have been admitted and there is no need to refer them to private or other tertiary care government hospitals,” he added. One of the vehicles in which doctors were heading to the hospital was damaged in the stone pelting near the New bus stand. Luckily nobody was injured in the incident.

He stated that nine persons were brought dead to the hospital till Wednesday afternoon.

He added that only person who was critically injured, died in the hospital and that the condition of one more person who is being treated was critical. “The six surgery theatres in the hospital have been busy from 3 pm on Tuesday,” he said.

He added that efforts were underway to fix issues of unavailability of food and water for the attendants of the patients.

Edwin Joe said that four judicial magistrates – from Tuticorin, Kovilpatti, Srivaikuntam and Tiruchendur – were conducting inquest before post-mortem for those who were killed in the violence was conducted.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Tuticorin: 'We rescued cops from rioters, but they assaulted us'

TNN | May 24, 2018, 12.55 AM IST



TUTICORIN: The videos of police assaulting the mob during the anti-Sterlite protest have been going viral on social media over the last two days, so have videos of a group of youths protecting policemen and women from the rioters. Among those who saved the police from harm was K Santhosh Raj, 21, of Pandarampatti, a BCom student and district organiser of All College Students Federation in Tuticorin district, and his friends.

Santhosh, who has been actively taking part in the anti-Sterlite protest, was part of the rally that began at Our Lady Of Snows church near the old harbour in the city. "More than hundred students from various colleges were with me. We were near the bypass bridge when the mob started

resisting the police with vigour. The police were outnumbered and they ran for their lives", he told TOI while getting treated for his injuries at a hospital.

He said a lone woman constable got separated from the other men and women and were surrounded by a mob with logs and stones in their hands. But Santhosh and two other student protesters stood between her and the mob. "Don't show your courage to a woman," they told the men who immediately left the woman and walked to another direction. The trio then escorted her to safety from the place and united her with the other police personnel. "Then, myself and other protesters headed to the collectorate where we were brutally attacked by the police," Santhosh lamented.

Santhosh had a long cut on the right side of his forehead that needed nine stitches and received severe beatings with the lathi. Santhosh said he was among those who were in the front row of the protests. According to him, the protesters had planned to take out a silent rally to the collectorate despite denial of permission by the police.

"Like the jallikattu protests, we wanted to stage a silent but strong protest by waiting under the trees at the collectorate. But the police instigated us by attacking us without any reason,"he said.

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

'We carried the injured head constable for 2km'

tnn | May 24, 2018, 12.54 AM IST

Tuticorin: "There was no facility to take him to hospital. A colleague and I carried him, hoisting him on to our shoulders in turns, for more than two kilometres before we were able to find an autorickshaw and rush him to hospital," said a policeman. Himself injured in the incidents where anti-Sterlite protesters turned against the men and women in khaki in Tuticorin on Tuesday, the policeman was speaking to TOI over phone about how he had helped bring Jaisankar, a head constable in the special banch CID, to hospital.

While Jaisankar, a resident of Ettaiyapuram, was unable to speak, the injured policeman said: "The protesters chased and attacked us. When Jaisankar, who was in civilain clothes, took cover behind a shack, they attacked him from behind."

"Some residents of the area noticed him (Jaishankar) being attacked before we were able to get to him. The doctors stiched up the wound on his head caused when some people hit him with a blade like weapon. It was a planned attack. Had the residents not noticed him, we may have lost him. Many of the protesters knew him (Jaishankar) and targeted him."

The policeman also complained that there was no proper command from senior officers even as the personnel on the filed tried to escape from the enraged crowd that attacked them with sticks and stones.

He claimed that few had anticipated that the protesters would gather in huge numbers and that there was little preparation to thwart any untoward incident. "There was a lack of briefing. None of the local police personnel suffered injuries. All those injured were from the armed reserve or the Tamil Nadu special battalion. There should have been a two-layer network of barricades around the collectorate to protect the police personnel," he said.

At least 44 police personnel were injured in stone-pelting incidents. Among the injured are Sahaya Robin, 26, Santhamari, 26, Mary Jagirtha, 41, Sophia, 25, Nithya, 25, Sabura Banu, 30, Grace Mariammal, 31, Priya, 31, Selvarani, 43, Ajitha, 40, Arun Christopher, 36, Arunkumar, 26, Manirathnam, 25, Mano, 27, and Sathyamurthy, 27.

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Death toll rises to 13 in Tuticorin police firing

TNN | May 24, 2018, 12.26 PM IST



MADURAI: The death toll in Tuticorin's anti-Sterlite protest rose to 13 on Thursday with Selvasekar, 42 of Sawyerpuram, succumbing to injuries at the Tuticorin government hospital.

Security at the government hospital in Tuticorin was tight and the situation continued to be tense. About 200 police personnel has been stationed there, including senior IPS officers.

Read also: [Police firing killed 796 civilians in 6 years](#)

Sources said postmortem examination had been performed on two of the 13 bodies, as only three families of the deceased persons were present for inquest, as rules mandate.

The families of ten other victims have not arrived at the hospital, some of them angry with the system and the others keeping away due to local pressure. On Wednesday, the Madras high court had ordered that 11 bodies be preserved until further orders.

Meanwhile, former Tirunelveli District Collector, Sandeep Nanduri took charge as new Tuticorin District Collector.

Protesters court arrest over firing



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

Government accused of unleashing terror on innocent people; probe by sitting HC judge demanded

Political outfits including the Thamizhaga Vazhvirimai Kootamaippu, the Dravidar Viduthalai Kazhagam, the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi and the May 17 Movement took out a procession and held an agitation in the city on Thursday condemning the killing of 12 protesters in Thoothukudi.

They assembled in groups before the Triplicane police station and marched

towards the State Guest House on Walajah Road holding placards condemning the State government for “unleashing terror on the people who were agitating in a peaceful manner” and also demanding a ban on the Sterlite plant in Thoothukudi.

Tamizhar Vazhvurimai Katchi leader T. Velmurugan said, “We demand that police officials and the District Collector of Thoothukudi be booked on charges of murder. A sitting judge of the Madras High Court should probe the causes that led to the shooting.”

Members of Makkal Mandram, the Social Democratic Party, the Aam Aadmi Party and a few other political parties also joined in the agitation. Activists of the May 17 Movement said the Sterlite plant should be closed and Chief Secretary Girija Vaidyanathan should be terminated from service for allegedly issuing the firing order.

The agitators demanded a probe by the United Nations Human Rights Commission into the firing. They also wanted the AIADMK government to resign. A heavy posse of police personnel was deployed to avert any untoward incident.

Mr. Velmurugan, Dravidar Viduthalai Kazhagam leader Kolathur Mani, Tamil Desiya Munnani president Pazha Nedumaran, Tamilaga Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam leader John Pandian, directors Ameer and Ram and their supporters were blocked by the police near the State Guest House when they attempted to proceed towards the Secretariat. They were later detained and taken to a community hall in Chintadripet.

TAMIL NADU

Thoothukudi violence: CB-CID continues searches



STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 25, 2018 00:00 IST

Collects evidence materials such as stones, shards of glass

Crime Branch – Criminal Investigation Department (CB-CID) officials continued their searches for evidence in connection with the anti-Sterlite violence for the second day on Sunday.

The team conducted searches at various places, including Sterlite quarters, Collectorate, Anna Nagar and Threspuram. The officials also conducted a search at Tharuvaikulam dump yard, looking for remnants and other materials

related to the incident.

Samples from the vehicles which were torched during the May 22 violence were collected by the forensic team. Sources said no cartridges fired by the police were found on Saturday. Possible evidence materials such as stones and shards of glass were collected.

Ten teams comprising nearly 100 officials, including those from Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad, Forensic Sciences department, Ballistics department and the Department of Survey, have undertaken three-day search and combing operations across the city. The searches were recorded in video and photographs.

Tamil Nadu CM says Sterlite will be shut; power supply cut



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

TNPCB orders closure after finding the unit was preparing to resume production

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami said on Thursday that the State government was taking all steps legally to permanently close down Sterlite Copper, a Vedanta Group company, in Thoothukudi.

Thirteen persons were killed in police firing during the protests against the plant.

Earlier in the day, the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) ordered the closure of the Sterlite Copper unit with immediate effect and disconnected

electricity supply to the plant at 5.15 a.m.

“This government is Amma’s [Jayalithaa’s] government that respects the sentiments of the people. As far as the Sterlite issue is concerned, this Amma’s government is taking steps legally to close down the unit,” Mr. Palaniswami told journalists at the Secretariat.

His statement came soon after Leader of the Opposition M.K. Stalin staged a dharna outside the Chief Minister’s chamber. Mr. Stalin, who was physically removed from the Secretariat premises and detained till the evening, alleged that the Sterlite Group had bribed the government.

TNPCB inspections

In its order, the TNPCB said that during inspections by its officials on May 18 and 19, it was found that “the unit was carrying out activities to resume its production operations” though permission was not granted.

Following this, the Joint Chief Environmental Engineer, Tirunelveli, recommended disconnection of electricity supply to the plant under Section 33A of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, and Section 31A of the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.

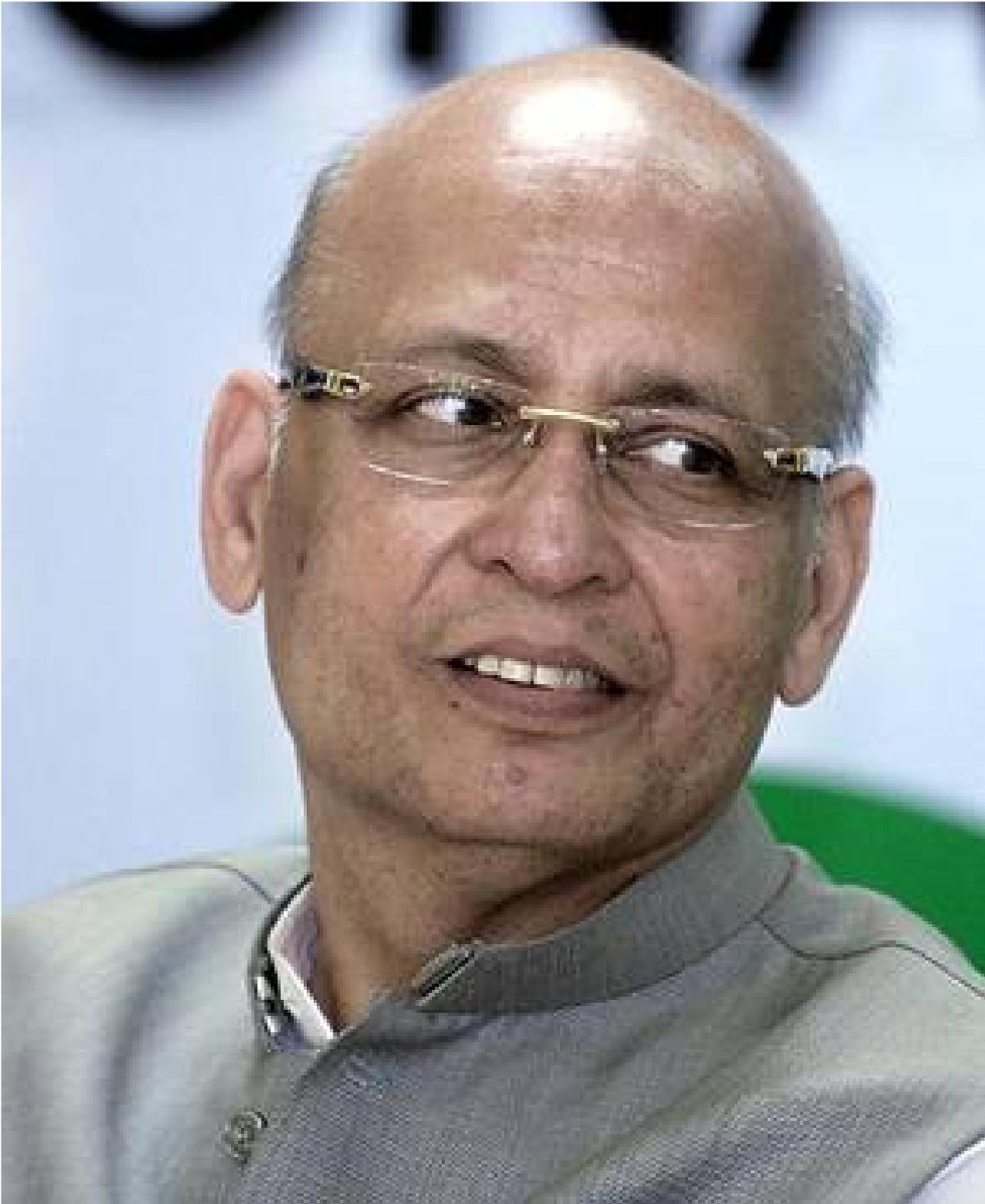
Awaiting nod: Vedanta

However, Vedanta Chairman Anil Agarwal on Thursday said the company would like to continue the business at the plant with the “wish” of the community.

At present, the company is waiting for clearance from the court and the government to restart the plant, which was closed for annual maintenance, Mr. Agarwal said in a video statement on Twitter.

NATIONAL

Why is PM silent on police firing: Cong.



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

'TN govt. has forfeited right to rule'

Questioning Prime Minister Narendra Modi's silence over the Thoothukudi police firing that killed 11 people for protesting against a copper plant, the Congress on Thursday asked the Prime Minister to spell out if the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu was "fit to be dismissed."

Senior Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi told reporters at a press briefing that the, "Tamil Nadu government has forfeited the political, moral, ethical right to rule" and demanded an immediate apology for police brutality.

Playing on the viral 'fitness challenge' on social media, Mr. Singhvi said, "This is another kind of fitness challenge...thrown to the Prime Minister. Does he think the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu is fit to be dismissed?"

Posing a series of questions, the Congress alleged that the Modi government in December 2014 had done away with the process of public consultation before granting environmental clearances to projects such as the one in Thoothukudi.

Mr. Singhvi also said the State government should find out which government officials had allowed the project in Tamil Nadu after it was moved out of Maharashtra owing to public protests in 1994.

TAMIL NADU

CM mum on who ordered firing



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

Blames Opposition, anti-social elements

Countering charges against the State government and questions on the need for police firing which claimed the lives of 13 anti-Sterlite protesters in

145

Thoothukudi, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Thursday accused the Opposition parties and anti-social elements of instigating the protesters with an intention to malign the reputation of the government.

In an interaction with the media for the first time since the firing on May 22, Mr. Palaniswami rejected claims that the firing was pre-planned..

He evaded queries about who gave permission given to open fire at the protesters. When asked about the need for police to fire at unarmed protesters, Mr. Palaniswami said it was only natural human tendency to self defend in the face of an attack. Mr. Palaniswami maintained that the Opposition parties and anti-social elements instigated the protesters.

The police initially used tear gas and then resorted to lathi charge, Mr. Palaniswami contended. But, protesters still went about torching vehicles at the Collectorate and also on Sterlite campus, he claimed and added: “They attempted to enter the Collectorate. We came to know about all this only through the media. Because I was here and you are all aware [that CM was in Secretariat for the review meetings].”

Replying to a query as to why he has not visited the riot-hit city yet, he said promulgation orders were in place and everyone should respect the law. “However, some political party leaders are visiting despite the promulgation orders.”

As for Mr. Stalin’s claim that the CM refused to meet him, Mr. Palaniswami said Mr. Stalin was in fact present at the Assembly Business Advisory Committee meeting and that he was surprised to see Mr. Stalin making contrary claims later.

DMK cadre stage protests



STAFF REPORTER

COIMBATORE, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

Around 350 supporters of DMK were removed and detained in Coimbatore on Thursday after they took part in agitations condemning the police firing in Thoothukudi and also removing party's working president M.K. Stalin from Secretariat in Chennai.

In Coimbatore rural, DMK workers staged protests at eight places from where the police detained 233 people including three women. In Coimbatore city, 118 party workers including seven women were removed and detained after they staged protests and road blockade.

In the city, DMK workers started the protests by blocking the road in front of party's district office in North Coimbatore under the leadership of S. Muthusamy. The cadre also blocked roads at Singanallur, Radha Krishna Mill junction and in front of the Collectorate.

A section of lawyers practising in the combined court complex in Coimbatore

boycotted court proceedings on Thursday. They have decided to stay away from the proceedings on Friday too.

Protesters removed
from VOC Grounds

The city police on Thursday removed and detained 28 persons including women who assembled at VOC Grounds to stage an agitation condemning police firing in Thoothukkudi.

The group entered the ground in the evening and sat in a corner though police were posted at different points to avert gathering of protesters in the place. They were immediately shifted by the police in a van. A senior police officer said that those detained were being interrogated to collect information about their whereabouts and reasons behind the public assembling.

TAMIL NADU

Arrested

STAFF REPORTER

DINDIGUL, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

Twenty cadre of DYFI were arrested when they observed fast here without permission on Thursday in protest against the firing in Thoothukudi.

Forum seeks judicial probe

STAFF REPORTER

CHENNAI, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

The National Confederation of Human Rights Organisations (NCHRO) on Thursday demanded that a judicial inquiry be carried out by a sitting High Court judge from a neighbouring State into the Thoothukudi firing. It wanted to know whether necessary warnings were given and due police rules were followed before resorting to firing.

It also sought to know why most of the victims were from a particular organisation and why the upper portions of their body was targeted during firing.

“If it is found that the police officers started firing without following protocol, they should be suspended and criminal action should be initiated against them,” said the statement from A. Marx, chairperson of the NCHRO.

The Tamil Nadu Elementary School Teachers Federation has also condemned the killing of 13 persons in Thoothukudi. In a statement, N. Rangarajan, the general secretary of the association said they condemned the actions of the Tamil Nadu government and the police.

“The protests had been going on peacefully for 100 days and the State government should have called for peaceful talks long back instead of resorting to the use of violence like this,” the statement read. The association demanded that the families of the persons who died in the police firing should be granted Rs. 1 crore compensation each. They also demanded jobs for the next of kin of the victims.

Bank staff condemn firing

The Bank Employees Federation of India (BEFI) condemned the actions of the police department in Thoothukudi and demanded that the Sterlite factory be permanently closed down. In a statement, the federation called for a judicial enquiry into the incident and said the bereaved families of those who had been killed should be given government jobs.

Lukewarm response to bandh by trader's body



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

‘Shops that were open on Thursday may be shut on Friday for another bandh call’

The bandh called by the Tamil Nadu Vanigar Sangankalin Peravai, a trader’s body, on Thursday as a mark of support for protesters in Thoothukudi evinced lukewarm response in the city as shops in many areas remained open.

However, those in localities including Perambur and Purasawalkam, downed shutters in support.

T. Vellaiyan, president of the Peravai, said, nearly 50% of the shops did business on Thursday since another bandh had been called on Friday.

“There was some apprehension among many traders if they will have to shut shop tomorrow as well. So, the ones that were open today are likely to remain shut on Friday,” he added.

Residents said they didn't face much difficulty as most shops were open through the day.

R. Anbazhagan, a resident of Porur, said, "I never faced any problem buying vegetables or groceries; it was business as usual for shops in our area," he added.

Black flags hoisted

Milk retailers and dealers did business wearing black badges and bands. Many had hoisted black flags in front of their homes and establishments as a mark of support.

"We are not taking part in Friday's bandh since we cannot participate in such bandhs regularly. If any political party or association calls for bandhs then they must close their own establishments first," said S.A. Ponnusamy, Tamil Nadu Milk Dealers Employees Welfare Association.

TAMIL NADU

Lift prohibitory orders immediately, says Ramadoss



STAFF REPORTER

CHENNAI, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

'Curbs may lead to another violent clash'

PMK founder S. Ramadoss has demanded the lifting of prohibitory orders in Thoothukudi immediately. The district administration on Thursday extended the order issued under Section 144 CrPC till May 27.

In a statement, Dr. Ramadoss said that the police action had created much hardship for the people and the situation would become disastrous if there was another clash between the protesters and the police.

“Peace can be brought back only by removing the restrictions in Thoothukudi and restoring communication facilities. The police deployment should be withdrawn and the people should be allowed to be free in the area,” said Dr. Ramadoss.

Meanwhile, PMK youth wing leader Anbumani Ramadoss announced protests across Tamil Nadu, demanding that the AIADMK-government resign immediately.

“The benami government which has killed 12 protesters who were peacefully protesting has not realised its mistake. The people who have been fighting for their rights are being portrayed as ‘violent’. This is condemnable,” said Dr. Anbumani.

Viuduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi founder Thol Thirumavalavan has also urged the people of Tamil Nadu to participate in the bandh that has been announced on May 25 against the killing of the protesters by the police.

In a statement, Dravidar Kazhagam president K. Veeramani asked whether the State government was trying to send a message to those who organise protest by using bullets.

“The Centre and the State government should permanently shut down the Sterlite plant. If there is any hesitation on this, the State government must realise that there is a danger that the riots will spread across Tamil Nadu,” said Mr. Veeramani.

Peace can be brought back only by removing the restrictions in Thoothukudi

TAMIL NADU

'Police picked targets in Thoothukudi'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

First eight killings planned by the police and executed with precision, says forum

An organisation claimed on Thursday that the police had targeted and killed eight of the 12 individuals killed in the violence at Thoothukudi on May 22-23.

At an interaction at the Chennai Press Club, Fr. Jegath Gaspar Raj, who spoke on behalf of NAAM-Thamizhaka Makkal and "people of Tuticorin, Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari living in Chennai" claimed that eight individuals killed on May 22 had been shot at a close range.

"We categorically state that the first eight killings were planned in advance by the police and executed with precision by well-trained police shooters who mingled with the protesters as civilians," said the statement.

The organisers, which included D. Thomas Franco of the All India Bank Officers' Confederation, said that they had collected eyewitness testimonies on six of the eight shootings.

Fr. Raj said that he suspected that the eight had been targeted because they were among the coordinators of the protest.

"That a 17-year-old school-going girl Snolin has been shot in the mouth from close range should shake the conscience of the entire nation," said a statement released by the organisers.

They demanded the permanent closure of the Sterlite Copper plant and refused to accept the appointment of the one-person enquiry commission to look into the violence.

"Venkatesh, the previous Collector, and Mahendran, the previous Superintendent of Police, should be immediately suspended and slapped with pre-meditated murder charges," said the statement.

That a 17-year-old girl has been shot should shake the conscience of the entire nation

Forum

TAMIL NADU

'Exiting Thoothukudi not on the cards'



Sanjay Vijayakumar
Sangeetha Kandavel

CHENNAI, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

Holding 'external forces' responsible for the mayhem, the CEO of Sterlite says the company will continue to pursue legal options

The continuing agitation and the death of 12 people in police firing in the last two days in Thoothukudi have raised questions over the fate of Sterlite Copper's smelter plant. In an interview, P. Ramnath, Chief Executive Officer, Sterlite Copper, accused external forces of inciting local people and said there were enough indications early on that the May 22 protest would not be peaceful. He also said exiting the State was not on cards, and the company would pursue the legal route.

The protests were peaceful during the first 100 days. What changed on May 22?

In run up to the May 22 agitation, sufficient warnings were given through social media, posters and pamphlets that it was not going to be a peaceful protest. There were so many social media messages which were inflammatory. There have been posters all over the place showing the plant burning. They made it clear that May 22 was going to be the last day for Sterlite Copper. From the media, we got to know that the police and the Sub-Collector called the protesters for a peace meeting and that they were allotted a ground for holding the protest peacefully. One faction agreed, and the other, did not. Therefore, the violent protest happened, and what followed is very, very unfortunate.

The shootings probably could have been avoided. That is something that the police and the administration have to take care off. We condone the act of violence on our own premises with our own people coming under attack.

So who are these protesters and why are they calling for the plant's shutdown?

Our plant has been shut down for maintenance. In the last five to six years, there has been absolutely no incident. Suddenly, these issues are cropping up from nowhere. So, that's why we feel that some kind of an instigation has happened. Normally, the public won't react to this extent. Somebody should get into the details because this is a very serious matter. The company has invested so much – over Rs. 500 crore – on environmental safeguards and we abide by all standards. The Pollution Control Board also regularly takes

samples and records all data.

What do you think is the immediate solution?

The solution is legal at this point of time.

If things don't change, will you consider looking at an alternative destination for investments?

We have not even thought about it. Twenty years ago, we came down to Thoothukudi and set up the plant up for a reason. That reason continues. For the second plant also we had an option of moving to other States, but we decided to be here. That decision continues and that does not change as of now.

How do you plan to counter the negative image of the company/brand after this incident?

Over the years, we have followed the practice of inviting sections of the society to visit our plant every Saturday and answering their queries. Even during the recent protests, we invited environmentalists and villagers to visit the plant but they did not turn up. We want to allay the fears of people and are open to meeting and discussing with them.

For the full interview, go to: <http://bit.ly/SterliteCEOinterview>

We want to allay the fears of people and are open to meeting and discussing with them

P. Ramnath,

Chief Executive Officer, Sterlite Copper

Plea seeks CBI probe into firing



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

Special sitting likely today following request made to Chief Justice Indira Banerjee

A writ petition has been filed in the Madras High Court seeking a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) enquiry into the police firing that led to the death of 13 people during a violent protest demanding the closure of Vedanta-owned Sterlite copper smelting plant in Thoothukudi district.

Court sources said that a Division Bench of Justices T. Ravindran and P. Velmurugan would be holding a special sitting on Friday to hear the case following a written request made by petitioner A.P. Suryaprakasam, a 65-year-old advocate, to Chief Justice Indira Banerjee praying for an urgent hearing in view of the serious issue. Earlier, in the day, the advocate attempted to move the case before Justice V. Bhavani Subbaroyan.

However, the judge refused to entertain the case since the prayer was in the nature of a public interest litigation petition which could be heard only by a Division Bench and not a single judge of the court.

Thereafter, he made a representation to the Chief Justice with a plea to constitute a special bench for an urgent hearing since there was every possibility of the local police destroying the evidence.

Treatment needed

The petitioners also stated that hundreds of people who suffered injuries in the violence required appropriate medical treatment. Further, he complained about the fundamental right of the citizens to communicate with each other and access information online having been denied by the State government by imposing curbs on Internet services in Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari districts ever since violence broke out during the protest on Tuesday.

TODAY'S PAPER NATIONAL TAMIL NADU

TAMIL NADU

High drama as Stalin bundled out of CM's chamber



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

DMK working president says State government has taken bribe from Sterlite management; calls for Edappadi K. Palaniswami's resignation

In a dramatic turn of events on the Fort St. George premises here on Thursday, DMK working president and Leader of the Opposition M.K. Stalin staged a dharna near the Chief Minister's chamber, claiming he was denied a chance to take up the Thoothukudi firing incident with Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami. He later courted arrest along with a few DMK and Congress MLAs following their dharna on Rajaji Salai.

Mr. Stalin and a few DMK MLAs arrived at the Secretariat ahead of the

Assembly Business Advisory Committee meeting that was to be convened by Speaker P. Dhanapal at 11 a.m.

A few minutes later, Mr. Stalin addressed the media that his party along with the Congress decided to boycott the meeting over the government's inaction on the Thoothukudi firing incident.

Dharna staged

The situation soon grew tense when Mr. Stalin and his party MLAs attempted to go to the Chief Minister's chamber and staged a dharna. Those present near the chamber and the policemen were caught unprepared as DMK members went about raising slogans against the government and urging Mr. Palaniswami to resign.

The police forcibly carried Mr. Stalin out of the Secretariat building through Gate No: 7, amid sloganeering by DMK MLAs insisting on the Chief Minister's resignation. Mr. Stalin and the MLAs then staged a dharna inside the Secretariat campus near the press vehicle parking area. Eventually, Mr. Stalin led the MLAs onto Rajaji Salai and joined a group of protesters, who had gathered by then and raised slogans.

They were later detained by the police around 12 p.m. and Mr. Stalin and the MLAs were taken in a police van, even as a few hundred protesters attempted to block the vehicle.

Speaking to reporters from the police van after his detention, Mr. Stalin said protests would continue till the Chief Minister steps down. When asked about the case registered over his visit to Thoothukudi hospital where promulgation orders were in place, Mr. Stalin said he was prepared to face any case.

"I'm willing to face any case. Even if the police are to use bullets against me, like the way they killed people there, I'm willing to take them with a brave heart," Mr. Stalin said. He insisted on the resignation of Chief Minister, Director General of Police T.K. Rajendran. DMK Principal Secretary Duraimurugan also called for the resignation of the Chief Minister and DGP.

Mr. Stalin alleged that the AIADMK government unleashed violence and atrocities against the anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi as it had received bribe from the company.

“We saw the police firing from atop a van and killing people as if they were sparrows and crows. The act has clearly proved that the government has received bribe from the Sterlite management,” he told reporters.

He said the DMK and the Congress boycotted the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) meeting since the Chief Minister refused to pay heed to the demand that DGP T.K. Rajendran should be removed from the post.

‘Action no enough’

“Before staging a walkout I asked the Chief Minister to step down. The government has just transferred the Thoothukudi Collector and Superintendent of Police but has not taken any action against them. The Chief Minister is also not bothered to visit the people in Thoothukudi,” he alleged.

Asked why the Centre and the Union Home Ministry remained silent even after the death of 13 persons, he alleged the BJP government was offering a protective cover to the AIADMK government, which was indulging in “collection, commission and corruption.”

TAMIL NADU

Protests planned in London over weekend

Vidya Ram

LONDON, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

Pressure on Sterlite Copper, authorities in India and the United Kingdom mounts

A protest is set to take place outside the Indian embassy in London over the weekend, as pressure on Sterlite and authorities in India and the U.K. mounts following the killing of at least 12 people in police firing in Thoothukudi over On tuesday and Wednesday and the ruling by the Madras High Court to cease construction on the second unit of the plant.

With the company being headquartered in London and listed on the London Stock Exchange, the city has long been a centre of campaigns against the metal and mining giant's global activities both by NGOs and diaspora groups.

The protest on Saturday afternoon is being organised by Foil Vedanta, a grassroots activist group, centred in London but which has linked up with domestic campaign groups, which has been pushing for action on the company for the past few years, alongside Tamil People in U.K., a group representing several thousand members across Britain.

“We want to point to the collusion of the Indian State in these killings. We absolutely condemn the collusion with this British corporate entity who we hold directly responsible for the events,” said Miriam Rose, of Foil Vedanta.

“We are gravely concerned about the treatment of protesters and the violation of human rights,” said Karthik Kamalakannan of Tamil People in U.K.

“We also want to express our solidarity with the protesters. We are proud of the stand they have been taking against this corporate giant.”

The group held a protest outside the London house of Vedanta chairman Anil Agarwal on Tuesday, as soon as news of the killings broke. Mr. Kamalakannan said the group would also be reaching out to British MPs to

push for a parliamentary debate.

Past criticism

Vedanta Resources has faced criticism in the past from politicians and others in the U.K. over its track record.

Foil Vedanta has repeatedly called for a cross-party inquiry into Vedanta Resources, and a review of the decision by Britain's regulatory authorities to allow the company to list on the London Stock Exchange.

“We have been calling for the company to be delisted,” said Ms. Rose.

“Delisting it would be the ultimate action the government could take. We argue that the regulator never did the due diligence at the time. It should never have been listed.”

We want to express our solidarity with the protesters

TAMIL NADU

High drama as Stalin bundled out of CM's chamber



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

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the Congress decided to boycott the meeting over the government's inaction on the Thoothukudi firing incident.

Dharna staged

The situation soon grew tense when Mr. Stalin and his party MLAs attempted to go to the Chief Minister's chamber and staged a dharna. Those present near the chamber and the policemen were caught unprepared as DMK members went about raising slogans against the government and urging Mr. Palaniswami to resign.

The police forcibly carried Mr. Stalin out of the Secretariat building through Gate No: 7, amid sloganeering by DMK MLAs insisting on the Chief Minister's resignation. Mr. Stalin and the MLAs then staged a dharna inside the Secretariat campus near the press vehicle parking area. Eventually, Mr. Stalin led the MLAs onto Rajaji Salai and joined a group of protesters, who had gathered by then and raised slogans.

They were later detained by the police around 12 p.m. and Mr. Stalin and the MLAs were taken in a police van, even as a few hundred protesters attempted to block the vehicle.

Speaking to reporters from the police van after his detention, Mr. Stalin said protests would continue till the Chief Minister steps down. When asked about the case registered over his visit to Thoothukudi hospital where promulgation orders were in place, Mr. Stalin said he was prepared to face any case.

"I'm willing to face any case. Even if the police are to use bullets against me, like the way they killed people there, I'm willing to take them with a brave heart," Mr. Stalin said. He insisted on the resignation of Chief Minister, Director General of Police T.K. Rajendran. DMK Principal Secretary Duraimurugan also called for the resignation of the Chief Minister and DGP.

Mr. Stalin alleged that the AIADMK government unleashed violence and atrocities against the anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi as it had received bribe from the company.

"We saw the police firing from atop a van and killing people as if they were sparrows and crows. The act has clearly proved that the government has received bribe from the Sterlite management," he told reporters.

He said the DMK and the Congress boycotted the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) meeting since the Chief Minister refused to pay heed to the demand that DGP T.K. Rajendran should be removed from the post.

‘Action no enough’

“Before staging a walkout I asked the Chief Minister to step down. The government has just transferred the Thoothukudi Collector and Superintendent of Police but has not taken any action against them. The Chief Minister is also not bothered to visit the people in Thoothukudi,” he alleged.

Asked why the Centre and the Union Home Ministry remained silent even after the death of 13 persons, he alleged the BJP government was offering a protective cover to the AIADMK government, which was indulging in “collection, commission and corruption.”

TAMIL NADU

Protests planned in London over weekend

Vidya Ram

LONDON, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

Pressure on Sterlite Copper, authorities in India and the United Kingdom mounts

A protest is set to take place outside the Indian embassy in London over the weekend, as pressure on Sterlite and authorities in India and the U.K. mounts following the killing of at least 12 people in police firing in Thoothukudi over On tuesday and Wednesday and the ruling by the Madras High Court to cease construction on the second unit of the plant.

With the company being headquartered in London and listed on the London Stock Exchange, the city has long been a centre of campaigns against the metal and mining giant's global activities both by NGOs and diaspora groups.

The protest on Saturday afternoon is being organised by Foil Vedanta, a grassroots activist group, centred in London but which has linked up with domestic campaign groups, which has been pushing for action on the company for the past few years, alongside Tamil People in U.K., a group representing several thousand members across Britain.

“We want to point to the collusion of the Indian State in these killings. We absolutely condemn the collusion with this British corporate entity who we hold directly responsible for the events,” said Miriam Rose, of Foil Vedanta.

“We are gravely concerned about the treatment of protesters and the violation of human rights,” said Karthik Kamalakannan of Tamil People in U.K.

“We also want to express our solidarity with the protesters. We are proud of the stand they have been taking against this corporate giant.”

The group held a protest outside the London house of Vedanta chairman Anil Agarwal on Tuesday, as soon as news of the killings broke. Mr. Kamalakannan said the group would also be reaching out to British MPs to

push for a parliamentary debate.

Past criticism

Vedanta Resources has faced criticism in the past from politicians and others in the U.K. over its track record.

Foil Vedanta has repeatedly called for a cross-party inquiry into Vedanta Resources, and a review of the decision by Britain's regulatory authorities to allow the company to list on the London Stock Exchange.

“We have been calling for the company to be delisted,” said Ms. Rose.

“Delisting it would be the ultimate action the government could take. We argue that the regulator never did the due diligence at the time. It should never have been listed.”

We want to express our solidarity with the protesters

Karthik Kamalakannan

Tamil People in U.K.

Efforts on to restore normalcy



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

Top officials hold review meeting; Collector and SP to decide on restoring bus service today

Senior IAS officers who rushed to offer assistance to the administration here on Thursday met people from various walks of life and urged them to help the district come back to normalcy.

Principal Secretary (Agriculture) Gagandeep Singh Bedi, Additional Secretary and Secretary (Transport) P.W.C. Davidar, along with Inspector General of Police Shailesh Kumar Yadav, held meetings with senior people of the district from various quarters.

“We want to explain to them the steps the government has been taking to ensure availability of all necessary medical treatment to those who had sustained bullet injuries at the Government Hospital. We have ensured that the attendants of the injured did not face any hardship for food as all hotels had been closed,” Mr. Bedi said.

Officials have instructed government staff to open an Aavin booth on the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital premises for the benefit of patients and ensure round-the-clock operation of ‘Amma Unavagam’ near the hospital.

Responding to the people's appeal that no innocent people should be harassed and the police should not indulge in witch-hunting, Mr. Yadav said the police were not for any such action. Besides, the police were ready to give all protection to shops and commercial establishments whenever they were ready to open them.

Moreover, the mobile 'Farm Fresh' outlets should be kept open to take vegetables to the doorsteps of the public.

Stating that around 180 buses were being operated in rural areas, he said Collector and Superintendent of Police would take a call on resuming full bus service on Friday.

"We wanted elders of the city to spread the message about the intention of the government on these issues," he said.

Stating that power and water supply to Sterlite Copper has been disconnected, he said these steps had only reiterated the State Government's intention on the issue as explained by the Chief Minister earlier in the day.

When asked about the withdrawal of prohibitory orders, Mr. Bedi said the Collector and the Superintendent of Police, after reviewing the situation, would take appropriate decision.

The State Government would take a decision on resuming Internet connection as requested by the local people.

Collector Sandeep Nanduri, and new Superintendent of Police Murali Rambha and representatives of trade organisations, hoteliers, lorry operators and churches were among those who participated in the meeting.

Sporadic incidents of violence continue



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

Amidst sporadic incidents of violence in various parts of the town, Collector Sandeep Nanduri assumed office here on Thursday with the assurance that he would accord top priority to restore law and order in the town.

Mr. Sandeep, who was transferred to Thoothukudi last night from Tirunelveli district in the wake of unrest, said that he could achieve this great responsibility by involving all concerned and holding talks with the right people who were really worried about this development and really interested in peace.

When the reporters asked the Collector about the officer on whose order the police fired to quell the rioters who went on a rampage and arson on the Collectorate premises on Tuesday, Mr. Sandeep said the State Government, besides appointing two senior officers to look into the riot, had appointed a

senior judge to probe the violence-related incidents. “The probe will bring to light everything and answer all the queries,” he replied.

Mr. Sandeep visited the Thoothukudi Government Medical College Hospital where the victims of the violence, police lathi charge and firing are undergoing treatment. Barely 48 hours after the town witnessed unprecedented violence, destruction and loss of lives, 10% of small shops started transacting business on Thursday.

A huge crowd including the public and small traders thronged the Kamaraj Vegetable Market near the Old Bus Stand in the morning as the market was opened after two days to buy fruits and vegetables.

However, buses and the trucks were off the road for the third day on Thursday fearing attack by the mob that launch surprise attacks on properties to trigger panic. Miscreants set on fire a liquor shop on Bryant Nagar First Street around 5 a.m., in which the shop suffered extensive damage even before the fire could be extinguished. Another group set fire on a damaged bike lying on Anna Nagar 5th Street around 1.30 p.m.

Unidentified youth lobbed a petrol bomb on a Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation bus parked inside the depot at Muththammal Colony around 1 p.m. in which the vehicle suffered minor damage.

As the sporadic incidents of violence continued, a company of Tamil Nadu Commando Force was deployed in Thoothukudi on Thursday afternoon.

TAMIL NADU

Business takes a hit with suspension of Internet services



P. Sudhakar

THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

Larger outfits involved in export, import in Thoothukudi bear the brunt

The State government's decision to suspend Internet facility in the riot-hit Thoothukudi district along with neighbouring Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari districts in an attempt "to curb the spread of rumours and provocative posts through social media" had a telling impact on the business establishments.

As the government's order to the Internet service providers was translated into action on Wednesday night, it indeed served the purpose effectively.

However, the decision derailed the already badly-hit business.

Business establishments, especially Thoothukudi-based larger business houses involved in the export and import trade, suffered a lot as their transactions were seriously hit.

"This is a mindless step taken by an inept administration that miserably failed to anticipate the massive mobilisation and control the riot that was

meticulously orchestrated by a few. Instead of taking constructive measures to restore peace and initiating punitive measures against the divisive forces, Internet services have been suspended, leading to a loss of crores of rupees. This is most unfortunate,” said a leading businessman of Thoothukudi who is involved in shipping, clearing and forwarding.

However, customers were able to withdraw and deposit cash in the banks. Barring a few Automated Teller Machines in Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari districts, most of the ATMs were functioning as usual, much to the relief of the public.

“Most of the banks are functioning as usual, thanks to the dedicated lines they have,” a senior official attached to a lead district bank told The Hindu .

However, online cash transactions have come to a grinding halt.

TAMIL NADU

Monitoring officers review situation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

'No fresh violence reported in the town'

Two senior IAS officers — Agriculture Secretary Gagandeep Singh Bedi and Transport Secretary P.W.C. Davidar – arrived at the riot-hit town on Thursday to expedite the ongoing measures to ensure early restoration of peace.

After holding talks with the senior officials of various departments, Mr. Bedi also spoke to the representatives of various organisations, especially the traders' bodies, in a bid to encourage them to open their business establishments as it would facilitate the peace process.

Speaking to reporters on the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital premises after visiting the riot victims along with Mr. Davidar, Mr. Bedi said no fresh violence had been reported from any part of the town even as police patrol had been intensified.

Led by an ADGP (Law and Order), two Inspector Generals of Police, four Deputy Inspector Generals of Police and 15 Superintendents of Police had been deployed at riot-hit Thoothukudi to bring back normality. He expressed satisfaction with the gradual restoration of normality.

On the condition of the victims undergoing treatment, Mr. Bedi said major surgery to be conducted for saving the victims had been completed by roping in additional surgeons from other medical college hospitals, and most of them were “out of danger.”

TAMIL NADU

Death toll rises to 13

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

Though large-scale violence has stopped, minor incidents were reported

Death toll in the police firing during the anti-Sterlite protests rose to 13 on Thursday as one more victim succumbed to injuries at the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital.

P. Selvasekar, 43, of Iruvappapuram near Sawyerapuram in the district, a victim of police lathi-charge, succumbed to his injuries.

SIX UNITS OF POLICE RUSHED TO THOOTHUKUDI

Condemning the arrest of DMK's working president for voicing against the violence, hundreds of partymen staged a protest in Salem and Dharmapuri districts

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Coimbatore

MORE than six units of police force from the Western region headed by the City police commissioner K Periaiah and two SPs rushed to Thoothukudi to bring the situation under control. As the public strength protesting against the Sterlite unit outnumbered the police in the Thoothukudi, the police force here was asked to rush to the Thoothukudi on Wednesday night.

At the behest of the top official from the State police, City Police Commissioner K Periaiah, Erode Superintendent of Police (SP) R Sivakumar and Dharmapuri SP Bandi Gangadhar, each took one unit (40 persons) of police personnel from their districts, apart from moving two units each in Salem and Tirupur districts.

Speaking to 'Express', an official said that they were asked to move immediately to Thoothukudi as the existing police strength over there was exhausted and

struggling on the field. "In order to bring the situation under the control, additional strength has been moved. Similarly as many people in the Armed Reserve working in the Western districts hail from Southern districts, we have moved from here," said the official.

Protests: Meanwhile, condemning the police firing on the people protesting against the Sterlite unit in Thoothukudi, Coimbatore Bar Association lawyers decided to boycott the court proceedings here on Thursday and Friday. A few of the CBA lawyers also decided to reach Thoothukudi to provide legal support to the people.

Similarly, more than 2,000 traders associated with the Tamil Nadu Traders' Federation brought down their shutters across Coimbatore on Thursday.

After DMK working president MK Stalin was arrested in Chennai for besieging the Secretariat, DMK cadres staged road roko protest in four places in Coimbatore on Thursday afternoon.



DMK cadre in staging a protest against police shooting in Thoothukudi, at Peelamedu signal in Coimbatore | A RAJA CHIDAMBARAM

'Firing at peaceful protestors is violence'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Dharmapuri

POLICE firing at peaceful protestors is a gross violation of human rights, PMK president G K Mani said, demanding action against the officials concerned.

Addressing media persons here on Thursday, he said shooting innocent people protesting for their rights is a crime and officers who issued the shooting order should be held accountable for the deaths of over a dozen people.

"There are laws to protect a deer's life, but human life is not considered valuable," he said, condoling the death of people who were killed in police firing in Thoothukudi for two consecutive days on Tuesday and Wednesday.

When police have an array of methods, such as lobbing tear gas, resorting to lathi charge and using water cannons to disperse the crowd, firing at them is unacceptable, he said, adding the PMK will hold a state-wide protest against police firing on May 27. Asked about the DMK protest on May 25, he refused to comment and said he is only aware of the state-wide stir planned by his party.

Mani also condemned the BJP government for increase in prices of petrol and diesel and said it should be concerned about the welfare of the people and not businesses. The PMK leader congratulated the students who cleared SSLC public examinations and helped the state achieve 94.5 per cent pass. He urged the State to improve infrastructure in schools and make them accessible to even those living in remote hamlets.

Stir enters second day

Salem: Protests against the police firing at

Thoothukudi continues for the second day in the district on Thursday. Condemning the incident, various political outfits staged protests in front of the Salem collectorate, where several police personnel were deployed to avoid any untoward incident.

Meanwhile, cadres of Tamilaga Valvurimai Katchi (TVK), May 17 Movement and Tamil Desa Makkal Munnani staged a demo. Similarly, cadre of Revolutionary Marxist Party of India protested in front of the Head Post Office near Old Bus Stand

AIADMK will resolve the situation, says Thambidurai

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Krishnagiri

THE AIADMK government is working on efforts to resolve the situation in Thoothukudi, as it always strives for the welfare of the people, announced M Thambidurai, Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha on Thursday.

He met with the media after his visit home at Bargur for the memorial service of his mother and said that the AIADMK always worked for the welfare of the people. "The government is trying to protect the people and prevent the escalation of any violence in Thoothukudi. The safety of the people has been the most important function of the Chief minister," he said.

Sterlite was closed by former CM J Jayalalithaa. It was only after the Supreme Court allowed the restart of the Sterlite plant, did problems arise, he added.

Commenting on the Cauvery issue, he said that the promised water will be provided by Cauvery Water Management Scheme and the people need not worry. He also rubbished questions on BJP's influence in Tamil Nadu and said that neither BJP nor Congress will rule Tamil Nadu.

DMK cadre stir against Stalin's arrest in two districts

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Salem/Dharmapuri

MEMBERS of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) staged a road-roko, condemning the arrest of party's working president MK Stalin, after he staged a dharna in front of the Secretariat in the State capital, in Salem and Dharmapuri districts on Thursday.

Led by Salem Central District DMK Secretary Panamarathupatti R Rajendran, the protestors gathered in front of the New Bus Stand and demanded release of the DMK leader. They also sought the closure of the Sterlite unit in Thoothukudi. Traffic came to a standstill for some time.

Despite police holding peace talks, they denied to withdraw the protest. About 200 DMK cadre were arrested, along with members of Congress, MDMK, CPI, CPM and VCK, and lodged in a marriage hall and released later.

Similarly as many as 191 DMK partymen were arrested for staging a protest across the eight taluqs in Dharmapuri district. Police said that the protestors were held as they failed to secure permission to stage a road-roko. While 88 cadre were arrested in Dharmapuri, about 108 were arrested in Ponnagaram, Palacode, Harur, Pappareddyatti and other areas. The protestors were released after issuing a warning.

While 88 cadre were arrested in Dharmapuri, about 108 were arrested in Ponnagaram, Palacode, Harur, Pappareddyatti and other areas. The protestors were released after issuing a warning.

Fri, 25 May 2018
epaper.newindianexpress.com/c/28963395



Police patrolling in Anna Nagar in Thoothukudi on Thursday, a day after a youth was killed in police firing in the area | V KARTHIKALAGU

Bandh today likely to affect normal life

Normal life is likely to be affected in the State Friday as opposition parties, led by DMK, called for a bandh to condemn police firing in Thoothukudi. About 40 per cent of buses are expected to stay off roads and shopkeepers are likely to join the bandh. On Thursday protests on the issue were seen in many parts of the State. **P5**

TNPCB stops power supply to Sterlite plant

Late Wednesday the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board ordered closure and disconnection of power supply to the Sterlite Copper plant in Thoothukudi. The power supply was disconnected in early hours of Thursday. The decision was taken following an inspection by Joint Chief Environmental Engineer. **P4**

65 detained protesters released on bail

As many as 65 protesters detained at Vallanadu shooting range unit, were released on bail by a local magistrate on Thursday. Meanwhile, officials, addressing media, said postmortem for six of the 13 bodies of the deceased protesters had been completed while the remaining bodies were preserved awaiting court orders.



New Collector confirms 13 killed in police firing

Says 19 protesters critical, of which 14 have gunshot injuries; Calm returns to Thoothukudi but normal life still paralysed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Thoothukudi

FOR the first time since police opened fire on anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi on Tuesday, the district administration on Thursday revealed the number of those killed, even as prohibitory orders in the district were extended till May 27. Thoothukudi Collector Sandeep Nanduri, who took charge earlier in the day, confirmed during an evening press conference that 13 persons had been killed.

"Thirteen, including 11 men and two women, were killed in police firing... 102 people sustained injuries during the protest. Of this, 19 persons, including 14 gun shot victims, are in critical condition," he said, addressing media with Transport Secretary PWC Davidar and Agriculture Secretary Gagandeep Singh Bedi. A total of 24 cars and 74 motorcycles, including nine government vehicles, were burnt in the protest causing loss of ₹1 crore, while 26 cars and 16 motorcycles, including 19 government vehicles, were partially damaged. As many as 34 police personnel — 24 men and 10 women — were injured.

Citing the Chief Minister's statement that the government had no intention of giving Sterlite permission to run its plant, he sought cooperation to restore tranquility. "We had a meeting with representatives of various associations of traders, country boat fishermen, labourers, lorry owners and Roman Catholic and CSI diocese who have expressed willingness to support us in restoring the peace," he said.

Meanwhile, police allegedly assaulted one John Mathan Kumar (29) of Polpettai on Thursday. Anna Nagar, where a youth was killed in firing Wednesday, was tense. By evening, however, calm had largely been restored in the district. Still, suspension of Internet and transport services had thrown life out of whack and vegetable and milk supplies were hard to come by. Acknowledging this, Nanduri said supply of drinking water, milk and vegetables had been increased and Amma Unavagam would function 24 hours for the next few days. **P7**

CM blames violence on 'anti-socials'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

CHIEF Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami on Thursday charged that anti-social elements, instigated by some political parties, had intruded into the May 22 peaceful procession in Thoothukudi and misguided it, resulting in violence. He said State government was taking all efforts to close the Sterlite plant through legal means.

On why police opened fire, he said, "When processionists attacked police, police used teargas shells to disperse them. Later, lathicharge was ordered. Even after this, vehicles inside collectorate were torched. They trespassed into Sterlite residential quarters and torched vehicles. When situation worsened, police opened fire. This was unfortunate." **P4**



STREETS BLOCKED

VOICES CHOKED



Sporadic violence was reported from across the city. Here a mob burnt tyres on roads to prevent traffic flow | V KARTHIKALAGU

Relatives of the missing, injured and fallen protesters thronged the government Thoothukudi hospital for a word on their loved ones | V KARTHIKALAGU

QUIET BUT NOT COMFORTABLE

Streets remained deserted, commercial establishments closed on a day commandos took out flag marches amid sporadic incidents of violence. Relatives of the injured and the fallen thronged the hospital for a word on their loved ones; TNPCB finally snaps power connection to Sterlite

OUTFITS TAKE TO STREETS IN CHENNAI

Chennai: Nearly 500 cadres of various Tamil outfits were arrested here on Thursday evening when they marched towards the Secretariat to lay siege to it. Above 500 cadres of various outfits, including Tamizhaga Vazhuvimal Katchi, Viduthala Chinthhalgal Katchi, Tamil Desiya Munnani, Tamizhar Kalal Iakkhya Panpattu Peraval and others, gathered near Kalaiavan Arangam under the leadership of T Velmurugan

C SIVAKUMAR / S GODSON WISELY DASS @Thoothukudi

TENSION prevailed in Thoothukudi for the third consecutive day, with the death toll touching 13. Sources identified the deceased as Selvasekar (30), a resident of Peikulam near Sawyerpuram. He was attacked by police near Collectorate on Tuesday. He was under treatment at Thoothukudi medical college hospital, where he died on Wednesday, said sources. On Thursday, most shops in the coastal town, except few tea stalls, remained closed. Roads were desolate, as vehicle movement was almost nil. Only a few autos plied, while buses remained off the roads.

Residents of Sevathaiyapuram, Naduvakurichi, Palliyankadu villages, and neighbouring Sawyerpuram took out a procession towards Sawyerpuram bazaar to condemn police action. The protesters burnt the chief minister in effigy and raised anti-Modi slogans. Later, a mob ransacked a TASM-AC shop in Sawyerpuram bazaar. While a few bottles were thrown on to the roads, anti-socials decamped with costly liquor bottles, said sources.

Heavy police presence

Heavy deployment of armed police on commercial streets triggered panic among the residents.

Apart from Agriculture Secretary Gagandeep Singh Bedi and Transport Secretary PWC Davidar and Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) (Law), around 3,000 policemen were patrolling the streets.

Besides the IG-level officers, three DIGs and 15 SPs were deployed to the town.

Banking sector takes a hit

Internet black out took a heavy toll on the banking sector, with commercial establishments, shipping agencies and other business outlets refraining from carrying out transactions. A bank official said that all banks are open in Thoothukudi, but transactions were low.

Sources said that businesses that had made full digital transition were the worst hit as Internet black out meant RTGS and NEFT transactions were put on hold. Sources in the ATM maintenance agencies said that cash loading had been stopped until further orders.

Meanwhile, cashless ATM kiosks added to the woes of the Thoothukudi residents. Almost all the ATMs in the town were out of cash.

Autopsy conducted

Postmortem examination was performed at the government Thoothukudi hospital on six bodies on Wednesday and Thursday combined. The autopsy was conducted in the presence of a judicial magistrate. The entire opera-

tion was video recorded.

65 protesters out on bail

As many as 65 protesters, kept under illegal detention at Vallanadu Shooting Range, were released on bail on Thursday. The police have so far arrested 68 persons and First Information Reports (FIRs) have been registered against 64, including politicians.

On Tuesday, 95 people were detained for rioting and were detained at the police shooting range in Vallanadu.

Following pressure, the police released 30 people and registered FIRs against the remaining 65. The judicial magistrate had remanded them.

Meanwhile, district judge Charuhasini released them on bail on Thursday.

Politicians flanked by their supporters visited the gunfire victims at Thoothukudi medical college hospital and consoled them and their families.

The South police had also booked 64 persons under IPC sections 143, 153 B and 188 for violating the prohibitory orders.

NHRC moved for CBI probe

The National Union of Backward Classes, SCs, STs Minorities (NUBC) petitioned the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) seeking a CBI inquiry into the police firing in Thoothukudi.

The NUBC sought the Commission to take up inquiry on its own or order a CBI inquiry to probe.

POLITICOS BOOKED

Thoothukudi: Cases were registered against various political leaders for visiting the government Thoothukudi hospital in violation of the prohibitory orders. DMK working president M K Stalin, MDMK leader Vaiko, MNM president Kamal Haasan, VCK president Thol Thirumavalavan, Tamil Nadu Congress Committee leader S Thirunavukkarasar, TMC leader G K Vasam were among booked by the police for violating the order.

STALIN ENACTING DRAMA: CM

Chennai: Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami on Thursday charged that MK Stalin had enacted a drama at Fort St George to make the headlines. Explaining what happened during the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) meeting of the State Assembly, the CM said that at 11, he, Deputy CM O Panneerselvam, Stalin and Congress legislature party leader KR Ramasamy were present. After sometime, Stalin left the BAC meeting suddenly

EPS slams opposition for violence

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ACCUSING some opposition parties and movements of instigating innocent people to stage such agitations, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami on Thursday said that in the past four or five months, Thoothukudi district administration had met at least 14 times and conveyed to the people all steps being taken by the State government.

On April 14, the Collector had given a detailed explanation through an advertisement too. All these steps were taken by the State government respecting the sentiments of the people, the CM said. "The people in Thoothukudi had staged agitations many times in a peaceful manner. But this time, instigated by some opposition parties, anti-social elements intruded into the agita-



Chief Minister Palaniswami addressing press persons in Chennai | EXPRESS

tion to create a crisis for this government and to bring a bad name to it... We feel so sad for the loss of lives in Thoothukudi," the chief minister said. Stating that the State government was doing its best to fulfil people's demands through legal

means, the CM pointed out that a case was pending before the SC now. Since the TNPCB had rejected the application of the plant to renew the licence, the unit could not function now. "This government respects the views of the people," he added.

Power connection to Sterlite snapped, unit closure ordered

SV KRISHNA CHAITANYA
@Chennai

IN wake of the current volatile situation, the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) has ordered closure and disconnection of power supply with immediate effect to Vedanta Sterlite copper smelter plant in Thoothukudi.

TNPCB chairman Nasimuddin passed the orders on Wednesday late evening and power connection was cut in the early hours on Thursday. The decision was taken following an inspection carried out by the Joint Chief Environmental Engineer on May 18 and 19, who found the unit carrying out activities to resume its production and recommended closure and disconnection of power supply to the unit.

"In the light of the above said facts it is decided, in exercise of the power conferred under Section 33A of Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 as amended and under Section 31A of Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 as amended, to issue directions for closure and disconnection of power supply to the unit," the order reads, but it does not elaborate on modalities of closure. Nasimuddin didn't respond to calls or messages from the Express.

However, the environmental activists called this a knee-jerk

reaction. "What the people were agitating for was the permanent closure of the Sterlite plant. The pollution board order tells nothing about what activities were being carried by the company to resume the production operation. The unit has already been closed for the last two months after its consent to operation renewal was rejected. Until measures are taken for permanent closure, the agitation will not die down," activist Nityanand Jayaraman told *Express*.



In the light of facts it is decided to issue directions for closure and disconnection of power supply to the unit

TNPCB

He said this latest order from the pollution board was as bad as its renewal rejection order. The board has deliberately chosen five week grounds for renewal rejection, which can be easily countered by Sterlite. Key violations such as development of green belt of 250 metres and shorter chimney stacks were not reported.

Recently, the Chennai Solidarity Group released a report that showed how Sterlite's chimney height is not corresponding to the rising level of emissions. Activists alleged that Sterlite has been allowed to expand its pro-

duction tenfold - from 40,000 tonnes per annum (tpa) to 4 lakh tpa - without any increase in chimney height, thereby increasing sulphur dioxide (SO₂) emissions. In response, the Sterlite maintains that as per the TNPCB consent condition, 2013, Sterlite was supposed to develop 43 hectares of greenbelt in and around the plant. The operations have developed 43 hectares of greenbelt and are compliant with the consent to operate condition. "We have also planted an additional 13 hectares of greenbelt in our township, which is located in close proximity to the plant. It must be noted that the TNPCB has not cited the lack of greenbelt as a reason for withdrawing the consent in 2018. The presence of sufficient greenbelt at Sterlite Copper has been verified by NEERI and TNPCB," the company said.

On the issue of emissions, the levels of SO₂ recorded in Cuddalore district is the highest in the state. There are multiple sources of SO₂ pollution in Thoothukudi. In addition to SO₂ pollution generated by vehicles, the city is also home to six power plants, which generate 4000 MW of power. Of this, Sterlite only generates 160 MW of power. Sterlite's SO₂ emissions which are within the prescribed norms constitute only 2.6% of the total industry-based emissions in Thoothukudi, it claims.





ROAD RAGE

Bike-borne youth blocking a road on the third day of the violence-prone anti-Sterlite protests in Thoothukudi on Thursday | **V KARTHIKALAGU**

BUILDING BRIDGES

Gagandeep Bedi: Crises manager par excellence

R SIVAKUMAR @Chennai

HAVING spent about two-and-a-half decades in public service in various capacities, senior IAS officer Gagandeep Singh Bedi remains the Tamil Nadu government's go-to man whenever the State is afflicted with crisis.

He is now burning the midnight oil in Thoothukudi following the violence over the Sterlite

issue, having been entrusted with the task of taking people into confidence, building bridges between angry protesters and the administration and bringing back normalcy.

Within hours of getting a call from the top, Bedi, serving as Principal secretary, Agriculture, packed up for a fresh round of crisis tackling assignment in Thoothukudi along with his sen-

ior colleague PWC Davidar.

The rich experience he gained on the field, particularly in Cuddalore district, will help him execute the task with ease and elan.

The 1993-batch IAS officer hailing from far-off Punjab strained every nerve in 2004 when Tsunami struck Cuddalore.

He led from the front to monitor the rescue, relief and rehabilitation measures, which

earned him laurels from many quarters.

The top brass turned to him in 2015 as the furious northeast monsoon struck. He was at it again when cyclones 'Vardah' and 'Ockhi' hit the State in 2016 and 2017.

"We are now concentrating on defusing the situation and restore normalcy soon," the officer says.



A youth-driven protest in Thoothukudi

C SHIVAKUMAR @ Thoothukudi

SNOWLIN, who was killed in police firing on May 22, was just a teenager but had already become one of the prominent leaders of the anti-Sterlite protests from Madha Kovil. This has brought to the fore how youngsters are backing the movement. Aside from organising protests, these college and, even school, students have been proving themselves a pain to police personnel over the past two days.

"We have joined the protest seeing the gross injustice against us. Almost every family is suffering from cancer or health-related ailment. The older generation has been swayed by money. But they can't buy us," said one young protester on condition of anonymity.

Anonymity and lack of a single



Policemen inquiring with a youth in Thoothukudi | V KARTHIKALAGU

leader has been the strength of the movement as politicians allegedly on the payroll of corporates have not been able to bribe them. Instead, the movement has

largely shunned politicians.

Even Thoothukudi MLA Geetha Jeevan, of the DMK, who rejected allegations that she had links with Sterlite, told Express

had any leadership been identified the issue would have been sorted out amicably. The anti-Sterlite movement was at its peak on March 24 as thousands took to the streets to show solidarity with villagers of Kumararediarpuram near the Sterlite plant.

The magnitude of the peaceful protest and its organisation was such that the entire nation focussed on the town.

However, after the police opened fire on May 22, bike-borne youngsters started erecting barricades and harassing cops. Some of them even attacked the police in Anna Nagar on Wednesday. The police opened fire and 22-year old Kalliappan was killed, resulting in further tension.

A protester said that no leaders tried to ease the tension but tried to use more force.



Bandh by opposition parties may hit normal life today

Most of the DMK's allies and friendly organisations extend support for shutdown; 40 per cent of buses and large number of autos likely to stay off roads

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Chennai

NORMAL life is likely to be affected a little in the State on Friday as opposition parties, led by the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), have called for a bandh on that day to condemn the recent police firing at the anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi.

About 40 per cent of buses and a significant number of autorickshaws are expected to stay away from roads as various trade unions have extended support to the bandh call. It is unclear how many shopkeepers will down shutters since prominent trader associations have not made their stance clear till Thursday evening.

However, with the popular sentiment against the police firing at the anti-Sterlite protesters, many shopkeepers may take part in the bandh.

This is the second bandh the State is witnessing in the last two months. Only on April 5 a near total bandh in the State was observed over the Cauvery issue.

Most of the DMK's allies and friendly organisations have extended support to the bandh. The Congress, Dravidar Kazhagam (DK), MDMK, VCK, Indian Union Muslim League, Manithaneya Makkal Katchi (MMK), CPI and CPM will take part in the bandh.

The PMK, however, is not taking part in the bandh. It said it would stage demonstrations across the State in all district headquarters on Saturday.

The party has demanded the resignation of Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami owing moral responsibility for the loss of lives in Thoothukudi police firing. Two other parties staying away from the bandh are the ruling AIADMK and the BJP.

The CITU affiliated to the CPM, AITUC affiliated to the CPI and the LPF have extended their support to the bandh.

The Auto Drivers Federation of Coimbatore has declared that they won't operate autos in Coimbatore city on Friday and all autos in the State won't run to extend their support for the bandh.

Moreover, bus services are expected to be limited on Friday. Out of 1.47 lakh workers in eight transport corporations, about 40 per cent of workers were in the CITU, Labour Progressive Federation (LPF), All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) and Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) affiliated to opposition parties including the CPM, DMK, CPI, Congress and VCK.

K Natarajan, treasurer, LPF, said that all transport workers' unions and employee unions would support the State-wide strike and buses would not operate from 6 am to 6 pm.

With the fleet capacity of 22,203, the six TNSTC divisions (Villupuram, Madurai, Kumbakonam, Salem, Tirunelveli and Coimbatore), Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) and State Express Transport Corporation (SETCO) cater for as many as 2.04 crore commuters every day.

Security has been beefed up across the city ahead of the bandh to avoid untoward incidents.

According to a senior police officer, around 30,000 city police personnel, including armed reserve personnel in uniform and plainclothes, will be deployed across the city and in all sensitive areas.

Security towers will be erected and ambulances in place. Security has been tightened around the Chief Minister's residence also.



DMK cadre protest as working president M K Stalin is arrested by police at the Secretariat on Thursday | P JAYAKANAR

TNCC chief wants internet ban lifted

Chennai: TNCC president S Thirunavukkarasar has urged the State government to lift the ban on internet in Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Kanniyakumari districts to enable students to apply for various courses online. In a press release, he condemned the ban on internet service following Sterlite violence. ENS

Traffic thrown out of gear

As traffic was disrupted when M K Stalin joined the road roko at Rajaji Salai, a large number of police personnel appeared on the scene. However, when the police forcefully arrested Stalin and others and packed them off into a van, the DMK cadre blocked the van with the barricades used by the police. After much effort, the police drove the van ahead.

High drama marks DMK dharna at Fort St George

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Chennai

FORT St George, the seat of power in Tamil Nadu, on Thursday witnessed high drama as DMK legislators and functionaries staged a dharna in the secretariat complex and in front of the office of Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami. The DMK cadre also resorted to road roko on the Rajaji Salai near the secretariat, halting traffic for over three hours and condemning the police firing in Thoothukudi on Tuesday against protesters demanding closure of Sterlite.

After an hour of chaos, Stalin, his party functionaries, and Congress leaders including party legislature party leader KR Ramasamy were arrested and let off in the evening.

The DMK demanded immediate resignation of the CM owing moral responsibility for the loss of lives in Thoothukudi and sacking of DGP T K Rajendran in this connection. Stalin said the agitation would not stop un-

til Palaniswami stopped down.

It all started when Stalin and Durai Murugan staged a walk-out from the Business Advisory Committee meeting held to decide the duration and schedule of business for the Assembly session which is to begin on May 29. Stalin said he had told Palaniswami at the BAC meeting to step down from office. Along with many MLAs and functionaries, he staged a dharna in front of the office of the CM, seeking an audience with him to represent about the Sterlite issue. After some time, Stalin was physically evicted from there.

Again, near the fourth gate, Stalin and his associates sat on the floor and raised slogans against the CM and the government.

Later, he joined the DMK cadre who were staging a road roko on the Rajaji Salai in front of the secretariat.

Meanwhile, on information, more number of DMK cadre started gathering on the Rajaji Salai.

HC rejects government plea to hand over bodies to relatives

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Chennai

A vacation bench of the Madras High Court has declined to modify its order passed yesterday, which directed the State government to preserve the bodies of the 12 persons, who were shot dead during the protests at Thoothukudi over the Sterlite issue on May 22 and 23.

A bench of Justices T Ravindran and P Velmurugan, which rejected the plea to release the

bodies of the dead to their close relatives, posted the matter for further hearing on May 30.

In a fresh petition seeking modification of the bench's May 23 order, State Home secretary and the DGP submitted that preserving the bodies with serious bullet injuries, even in cold storage, would lead to rapid decomposition. No purpose will be served by such preservation, it said and prayed the bench to modify its order by permitting the authorities to hand over the

bodies to their relatives after post-mortem.

The petition said a team of experienced and competent government doctors had conducted the post-mortem on two bodies in the presence of the Judicial Magistrates of four southern districts and panchayathars. This was done to avoid any possible complaint from any quarter later.

Forensic experts have opined that the post-mortem should be done as quickly as possible to

prevent decomposition of body leading to its impact on autopsy.

Experts in Anatomy and Forensic Medicine also said the body preserved by embalming or by any other chemical preservation will not benefit the purpose as it will produce colour changes and mask other signs, thus defeating the purpose of the preservation. Such cases of mass preservation will accelerate decomposition, he added.

When the government and all concerned were earnestly work-

ing to bring the situation back to normal, keeping the bodies of the unfortunate victims without disposal, itself may become a focal point of unnecessary unrest.

"In the light of these circumstances, the bodies can be handed over to the relatives. If the bodies were embalmed and kept under preservation with the authorities, there was every possibility of the public, gate crashing into the hospital and creating law and order problems..." the petition said.

Six units of police rush to Thoothukudi

Kovai Commissioner, two SPs head out with teams to help counterparts

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Coimbatore

MORE than six units of police force from the Western region headed by the City police commissioner K Periaiah and two superintendents of police rushed to Thoothukudi to bring the situation under control. As the public strength protesting against the Sterlite unit outnumbered the police in the Thoothukudi, the police force here was asked to rush to the Thoothukudi on Wednesday night.

At the behest of the top official from the State police department, City Police Commissioner K Periaiah, Erode Superintendent of Police (SP) R Sivakumar and Dharmapuri SP Bandi Gangadhar, each took one unit (40 persons) of police personnel from their districts, apart from moving two units each in Salem and Tirupur districts.

Speaking to *Express*, an official said that they were asked to move immediately to Thoothukudi as the existing police strength over there was exhausted and struggling on the field.

“In order to bring the situation under the control, additional strength has been moved. Similarly, as many people in the Armed Reserve working in the Western districts hail from Southern districts, we have moved from here,” said the official.

Meanwhile, condemning the police firing on the people protesting against the Sterlite unit in Thoothukudi, Coimbatore Bar Association lawyers decided to boycott the court proceedings here on Thursday and Friday. A few of the CBA lawyers also decided to reach Thoothukudi to provide legal support to the people.

Similarly, more than 2,000 traders associated with the Tamil Nadu Traders' Federation brought down their shutters across Coimbatore on Thursday.

After DMK working president MK Stalin was arrested in Chennai for besieging the Secretariat, DMK cadres staged road roko protest in four places in Coimbatore on Thursday afternoon. A total of 118 DMK members were arrested and released later in the day.



Govt to HC: Permit us to hand over victims' bodies

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 24

The state government has approached Madras high court to modify its order by permitting the authorities to hand over the bodies of persons killed during anti-Sterlite agitation to their relatives after post-mortem.

A division bench comprising Justices T. Ravindran and P. Velmurugan before whom the petition filed by the home secretary, DGP, Thoothukudi district collector and superintendent of police, Thoothukudi, came up for hearing, adjourned it to May 30.

The bench had on May 23 passed an interim order, directing the authorities to preserve the bodies of 11 persons killed in police firing during the anti-Sterlite agitation on May 22, until further orders.

In his petition filed on behalf of Home Secretary, DGP, District Collector, Thoothukudi and Superintendent of Police, Thoothukudi, M. Murugan, Strictly Confidential Joint Secretary to Government, Home (SC) department submitted

that team of experienced and competent government doctors have already conducted and completed the post mortem of two bodies in the presence of the Judicial Magistrates of four districts and the panchayathars. This was done to avoid any possible complaint from any quarter and the state government was ensuring that all procedures were being followed in this regard, he added.

He said the post mortem was being conducted in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Supreme Court in the presence of the necessary authorities and by competent doctors. Forensic experts have opined that the post mortem should be done as quickly as possible to prevent decomposition of body leading to its impact on the post mortem.

Also, there will be rapid decomposition while preserving a body with injuries even in cold storage. Hence no purpose will be served by such preservation. He said when the government and all concerned were earnestly working to bring the situation back to

normal, keeping the bodies of the unfortunate victims without disposal, itself may become a focal point of unnecessary unrest. Further, the relatives of two deceased persons on whom post mortem has been completed were insisting on the bodies to be handed over to them and have also issued consent letters in this regard. In light of these circumstances, the bodies can be handed over to the relatives. If the bodies were embalmed and kept under preservation with the authorities, there was every possibility of the public, gate crashing into the hospital and creating law and order problems. It was also likely to cause not only inconvenience but also affect the course of treatment given to the inpatients of the hospitals. The government was taking all necessary steps in accordance with law and to ensure restoration of peace and order and normal life in the areas at the earliest and retaining the bodies can cause problems and hinder in the process of earliest restoration of public peace and order, he added.

■ Copper smelter plant has its power switched off on TNPCB order

Eerily silent, Sterlite is down

ARUL OLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 24

The beleaguered Sterlite copper smelter factory here was hit by yet another crippling knock with its water and power supplies cut off early Thursday morning following directive from the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board ordering the disconnection.

"As the Chief Minister has said in Chennai earlier today, this means that Sterlite is closed down for good. And that meets the demand of the people. So it is now time for us to work towards restoration of normalcy", the newly appointed district collector Sandeep Nanduri told a crowded press conference here. He was joined by the team of two top bureaucrats who arrived from Chennai to assist the healing process - Gagandeep Singh Bedi and PWC Dawidar - besides the new SP Murali Rambha and IG (south zone) Sailesh Kumar Yadav.

While this signalled a victory for the protesters fighting for the last 100 days for the unit's closure alleging pollution of environment and groundwater, it also paved the way for the battle-ravaged trading town to slowly crawl back to normalcy. Train services resumed in the evening and buses are likely to start plying from early Friday, officials said.

The 100th day rally on May 22 had led to violence as the protesters marched threateningly towards the district collector's office and pelted stones, besides torching vehicles, leading to the police firing that

Who ordered the police firing?



The question, first raised by actor-politician Kamal Haasan soon after the Tuesday flare-up, was repeated by reporters at the media meet held by senior bureaucrats PWC Dawidar and Gagandeep Singh Bedi, along with the district collector and SP, besides the IG (south). "We will not comment on it now. That's part of the Commission of Inquiry (Justice Aruna Jagadeesan Commission constituted by the government to probe the violence and the police firing) and so we cannot comment on this point", said transport secretary Dawidar

caused the death of 13 people, including two women. The 13th victim breathed his last at the hospital without responding to intensive treatment to the head injury sustained in police lathi-charge, doctors said.

The death due to lathi injury could trigger a fresh wave of protests and demands from rights activists, as well as the locals, for strong action against the 'police brutality'. "They (government/police) had argued that people died of bullet wounds in chest and head because it was not possible to control the direction of fire directed at a charging mob, but how will they explain this brutality with lathis at close range?" asked a local youth.

This apart, the government's efforts at providing not just the 'healing touch' by crippling Sterlite but also rushing two top bureaucrats to assist the district administration could bear fruit albeit gradually.

I SHALL FACE ANY CASE AGAINST ME, SAYS STALIN

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 24

DMK working president who was evicted and later detained for leading a dharna in front of the Chief Minister's chamber in the State Secretariat on Thursday demanding Chief Minister's resignation in connection with the Thoothukudi police firing incident, said he was ready to face any case registered against him and will "bravely take any bullet" in the agitation for CM's resignation. ■ P4



Police acted against anti-socials, says CM

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 24

With the death toll in the Thoothukudi police firing rising to 13, following Selvasekar of Iruvappapuram village, succumbing to injuries due to lathicharge, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Thursday justified the police action against the anti-Sterlite protesters, saying the police acted in self-defence. Anti-social elements had attacked the police under the guise of agitation, he said referring to police firing on May 22 and 23.

"Some political parties and leaders had misguided the agitators against

Some political parties and leaders had misguided the agitators against Sterlite. Opposition parties were instigating innocent people to agitate," he said in a series of tweets in response to criticism from various quarters on police firing and violence.



TRADERS FEAR ₹100 CRORE LOSS

■ With no internet, port activities also hit

C. S. KOTTESWARAN | DC CHENNAI, MAY 24

The anti-Sterlite protests have reportedly led to the loss of ₹100 crore every day ever since the shootout in Thoothukudi.

According to local traders, digital India and the GST execution has now backfired without internet. "The entire wholesale trade now depends upon digital transactions through internet and the unprecedented violence has crippled the retail and the export business of pearl city," said A.M. Vikrama Raja, president, Tamil Nadu Vanigar Sangangalin Peramaippu (TNVSP).

The wholesale daily market of Thoothukudi alone accounts for ₹100 crore, but the overall trade loss per day will be actually high. There are reports of shipping and export industry being affected due to the Sterlite protests. "The law and order problem coupled with Internet restrictions has choked even neighboring districts. Due to the violence, workers from other districts engaged in Thoothukudi trade have left the city and traders are unable to produce invoice and engage customers," he noted.

The order by the state government banning internet for five days means straight away loss

of ₹10 crore for the telecom industry. There are more than 50 lakh mobile customers in these three districts (Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari), said a top source with a telecom major. "Airtel and Vodafone has 30 lakh customers. BSNL, Gio and others contribute to another 20 lakh customers with high data consumption. A blanket ban will make us loose at least ₹20 per day from a customer and this is a huge setback for the entire telecom sector," the source said adding that there is a constant pressure from our customers ranging from banks, MNCs and hospitals seeking immediate restora-

tion of internet services. According to a top TN BSNL sources, the call centres are flooded with complaints from customers in Thoothukudi complaining about poor signal with no internet. "Our staffers are under pressure and we are not used to such a scenario. Further thousands of new customers who recently migrated from Airtel to BSNL have linked their mobile numbers for all banking and digital transactions and this is the reason that has affected them," rued the BSNL insider. The sooner the state restores internet it is better for the public and the industry, the BSNL official said seeking anonymity.

STERLITE PROTESTS AFFECT ENGG EXAMS

ATTENDANCE COMES DOWN TO LESS THAN 5%

A.RAGU RAMAN | DC CHENNAI, MAY 24

Due to lack of transport facilities and the imposition of prohibitory orders in Thoothukudi district following the anti-Sterlite protests, less than 5 per cent of students only were able to attend engineering exams conducted on Wednesday and Thursday.

Owing to the circumstances, the Anna University has postponed three exams scheduled to be held in the course of next four days.

"Due to the unforeseen circumstances, the examinations scheduled on May 25, 26 and 28 for all the affiliated colleges are postponed. However, all the examinations scheduled from May 29 will as per the schedule," M.Venkatesan, Controller of Examinations (i/c), Anna University announced on Thursday.

The first year B.E., B.Tech exams have begun on May 19. For UG students, technical English

RESCHEDULE OF ENGINEERING EXAMS

Originally scheduled	Rescheduled date of exams
May 25	June 5
May 26	June 6
May 28	June 7

exam was conducted on Wednesday.

For PG students, the examinations for M.E., M.Tech and M.Arch subjects were held in the last two days.

There are nine engineering colleges in Thoothukudi district and over 3000 students are writing exams in these colleges.

"Students had faced issues in reaching the exam centres as buses were not plying in many parts of the district. Over the last two days, less than 5 per cent students appeared for the exam. Hence, we have decided to postpone the exams," officials said.

After the exam, the exam officials needed to upload the data to the portal. Due

to the suspension of internet services, the engineering colleges in three districts - Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari could not upload the data after the exams.

"We could have handed over the data on paper. But, the students' mobility was affected," an official from Anna University's regional centre in Tirunelveli said.

"The exams are being conducted statewide. So it has to be rescheduled for the entire state," a private college principal said.

Already, the semester exams scheduled to be conducted on May 19 was rescheduled to June 1 due to the clash with the Tamil Nadu Common Entrance Test (Tancet).

KIN OF 2 VICTIMS UNABLE TO TAKE BODY

DC CORRESPONDENT THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 24

Post-mortem has been completed on two bodies of the 12 killed in police firing in Thoothukudi against the anti-Sterlite protesters on Tuesday.

Though the relatives of 10 men and women killed in police firing on the two days on May 22 and 23, objected to perform autopsy, relatives of two victims - Karthik and Shanmugam, gave their consent following which autopsy was performed for the two bodies on Wednesday.

The bodies, however, were not handed over to the relatives as the Madurai bench of Madras high court had issued an order to preserve the dead bodies of all those killed in police firing till the further order is issued on May 31.

Responding to DC on whether the mortuary at Thoothukudi medical college has facilities to preserve the bodies for seven more days, Dr Edwin Joe, director of Medical Education (DME) said that the mortuary at the hospital is well equipped with adequate cold storage facilities with uninterrupted power supply to preserve the 12 bodies.



Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswami interacts with reporters.

-DC

Deeply pained by the loss of lives in tragedy: CM

■ From P1

Tense moments had prevailed for sometime outside the Secretariat complex when the DMK members at around half past noon resorted to a road blockade and argued with the police for evicting and detaining their leader. Stalin was later released in the evening.

Speaking to reporters outside the Secretariat Mr. Palaniswami claimed that some anti-social elements intruded into the agitation (against Sterlite plant in Thoothukudi) on May 22 and attacked police and torched police vehicles. Under a tense situation, the police resorted to firing, which was not pre-planned.

He charged the Opposition parties and anti-social elements

with vested interests, inciting violence and said the Tamil Nadu government has been taking steps to shut down the Sterlite Copper plant in Thoothukudi legally. "The State government continues to respect views of people on Sterlite issue. Thoothukudi administrators met agitators 14 times about government stand. "State government has been taking steps to close down Sterlite plant, through legal means. Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board did not renew license for Sterlite," he explained.

"I am deeply pained by the loss of precious lives during the agitation at Thoothukudi. The Ministry of Home Affairs has taken cognizance of the situation and has sought a report

on the incident, and the prevailing situation from the State government," Mr. Palaniswami said and added his thoughts were with the bereaved families. I also pray for the speedy recovery of the injured. "I appeal to the people in Thoothukudi to remain calm and maintain peace and tranquility in the region," he said.

Asked about DMK working president's arrest, he expressed surprise over the latter's protest near his office and said, "only a few minutes earlier we were together in the Assembly Business Advisory Committee meeting. Had he sought an appointment I would have received him in office," he said and accused the DMK of enacting a drama in the issue

Thoothukudi's new collector appeals for normalcy

M. ARULOLI | DC THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 24

Stating that main demand of shutting down Sterlite plant has already been met, the newly appointed Thoothukudi district collector Sandeep Nanduri has appealed to the people to cooperate with the government to restore normalcy in the district, rocked by violence for the past three days.

Speaking to mediapersons, in the presence of senior IAS officers P.W.C. Dawidar and Gagandeep Singh Bedi, IG (South Zone) Shailesh Kumar Yadav and SP Murali Ramba, in Thoothukudi on Thursday Nanduri said the major demand of the people was closure of Sterlite unit. Already, power connection and water link to the industry have been snapped. The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) has ordered the closure of Sterlite Copper Smelter plant with immediate effect and disconnected electricity supply to the unit on Thursday morning.

He appealed the people to cooperate with the district administration in bringing back normalcy in Thoothukudi.

The government has been making arrangements to provide basic amenities, including drinking water, and milk to the people. Amma Canteen will work round the clock and Aavin parlour opened for the benefit of the people. Farm Fresh outlet

operated by Tamil Nadu Cooperative Society will supply fresh vegetable. Ration shops will also work 24 hours in the coastal town.

He said 13 persons, including 2 women, died and 102 persons injured and of them 19 were sustained seriously injuries. And, 24 police personnel including 10 women sustained injuries.

Listing out damages following the violence in Thoothukudi, Sandeep Nanduri said according to preliminary estimate properties including vehicles were damaged. A total of 98 vehicles including 24 cars were totally destroyed and 46 vehicles damaged partially. He also said properties worth ₹29 lakh were damaged.

Later, IG (South Zone) Shailesh Kumar Yadav said passenger bus service has been restored in rural areas in the district. The district administration and the police are holding talks with representatives of various associations, including trader unions and hotel association. Soon normal bus service will be restored in Thoothukudi also.

The IG said 65 persons were arrested for causing violence. On Thursday, the police arrested 68 persons for causing violence. He said post-mortem on four bodies of the victims was conducted on the request of their family members. Based on the direction of Madras high court efforts were taken to preserve the victim bodies.

PONDY CONG TO SUPPORT BANDH CALL

DC CORRESPONDENT PUDUCHERRY, MAY 24

Puducherry Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) extended all support to the bandh call given by DMK and other political parties on Friday condemning police action against protesters in Thoothukudi, in which 11 people lost their lives.

PCC president and PWD minister A. Namasiyayam, who strongly condemned the police action against the agitators at Thoothukudi requested all sections of society to support the Bandh. "The police action against the protestors was barbaric in nature and cannot be accepted at any level. The bandh call was given to condemn the police action and to demand the closure of the Sterlite copper smelter plant in Thoothukudi district," he said.

The 'anti-people' government at Centre and Tamil Nadu will be thrown out as the people join together to protest. He had also requested all sections of society to join the protest and make the bandh a success.

An all-party meeting headed by the convener of DMK south unit R. Siva MLA adopted a resolution demanding the resignation of the ruling AIADMK government for allegedly owing 'moral responsibility' for the police firing.

DMK, ALLIES HAVE TAKEN UP FALSE CAMPAIGN ON STERLITE: PONNAR

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, MAY 24

Union minister of state for finance and shipping Pon Radhakrishnan has lashed out at the opposition DMK and its allies charging them with launching a "false and malicious campaign" with ulterior motive and app-

ealed to the people not to believe their "bundle of lies." "DMK and allies have taken up a false and malicious campaign against the Centre on the Sterlite's copper smelter plant, with an ulterior motive. They even go around giving one the impression that the Centre is behind this and also the

police firing in Thoothukudi on May 22 and 23. I appeal to the people of Thoothukudi and the people of Tamil Nadu not to believe the false campaign undertaken by the DMK and the Congress and their bundle of lies with regard to the Sterlite issue." Mr Radhakrishnan said on Th-

ursday night. Speaking to reporters at the Chennai airport, here, on the eve of the all party agitation announced by the DMK, Mr Radhakrishnan asserted that he had adequate "proof" on who was really behind granting permission to the Sterlite's plant in the southern coastal town.

Vaiko threatens of secession war, yet again

Chennai :Renewing his secessionist sloganeering, MDMK chief Vaiko slammed the Union Home Ministry for its offer to send Central forces to help in Thoothukudi and said if such forces enter Tamil Nadu, they would be treated as an 'occupation army' and trigger the campaign for secession of Tamil Nadu from the Union of India. After garlanding the statue of veteran DMK leader and founder of the highly popular Thanthi newspaper, C.P. Adityanar, at Egmore on the occasion of his death anniversary, Vaiko told reporters that the people of Thoothukudi were "now on fire" after the brutal attack by the police and the deceitful handling of the Sterlite issue by the State and Central Governments. On top of it all, should the Central forces enter Thoothukudi, they would be treated as 'occupation forces' and his MDMK would go all out to realise the dream of late Adityanar to achieve a separate Eelam nation, said the MDMK chief, a hardcore supporter of the LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran who had died fighting for separate Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka. This is not the first time that Vaiko had made his secessionist sounds.

Top court may have to sort Sterlite issue out

Narasimhan
Vijayaraghavan

Tamil Nadu is now in the grip of an avoidable fever from the campaign for closure of Vedanta's Sterlite copper smelter plant that led to the police firing on May 22, which has left 13 dead, including two women. The said movement was on its 100th day when it turned bloody. Most unfortunately, the entire state is now in agitation mode, with the protesters and the Opposition parties questioning the acts of both the state and Central governments.

Typically, after the Madurai Bench ordered suspension of the Sterlite expansion work, the TN Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) has stepped in to direct closure of the entire unit. As for the tragic deaths in the police firings, an inquiry has been ordered to be conducted by a retired judge of the

Madras high court. As is customary, the state has announced solatium to the families of the dead and for those maimed.

Even earlier, in the wake of the Kurangani fire tragedy, this writer had suggested the enactment of a just law to compensate victims from such tragedies; to repeal the age-old Fatal Accidents Act, 1846. The need for such law is possibly felt more when the victims are the result of state action, as in this case.

The more important question that needs to be recognised is there is total lack of clarity with regard to the ground situation. As early as on August 1, 1994, Sterlite had obtained a "No Objection" Certificate from TNPCB to set up a copper smelter plant at Melavittan village, Tuticorin and on January 16, 1995, the Union ministry of environment and forests granted the environmental clearance subject to conditions laid down by the TNPCB.

This clearance was challenged before the Madras high court and a series of writ petitions of the PIL

genre came to be tagged. The litigation went up to the Supreme Court, which on April 2, 2013, allowed the appeals filed by Sterlite, but with the condition that the company must pay compensation of Rs. 100 crores, on the principle of "Polluter Pays" - 'for having polluted the environment in the vicinity of its plant and for having operated the plant without a renewal of the consents by the TNPCB for a fairly long period...'. The interest from this deposit was directed to be spent for improving the environment, including water and soil, in the vicinity of the plant. While directing Sterlite to pay the compensation, the Supreme Court was 'conscious the plant contributes substantially to the copper production in India and copper is used in defence, electricity, automobile, construction and infrastructure. The plant has about 1,300 employees and provides employment to a large number of people through contractors. A number of ancillary industries are also dependent on the plant.'

Relying upon 'public interest', the top court refused to order closure.

The Supreme Court had even recorded its appreciation to voluntary bodies which chose to venture for the cause of environment 'against the mighty and resourceful.' While so ordering, the Supreme Court made it clear that it was left to TNPCB to deal with the circumstances, in accordance with law, 'including a direction for closure of the plant, for the protection of the environment.'

It is in the wake of these developments that the recent protests gathered pace after Sterlite announced plans to invest Rs 25 billion more to double its production capacity. In March 2018, they applied for renewal of consent to operate the existing smelter plant. On TNPCB seeking clarifications, the dispute has been escalated to the appellate tribunal, and is slated for hearing in June 2018.

The bottom line is that despite the clear cut verdict of the Supreme Court dur-

ing the previous round of April 2, 2013, the TNPCB and the state of Tamil Nadu and possibly even the Central government have chosen to sit on the issue, until the protests now broke out.

All stakeholders have traded charges on the bonafides of the agitation, or lack of it and the social/vernacular media is full of it, with no room to sift #FakeNews from truth. The ordinary Indian is flummoxed except to mourn the loss of lives.

Yet again, it has to be the much criticised judicial overreach of the Supreme Court, which may have to rescue the ordinary Indian from the omissions and commissions of the executive. It is singularly unfortunate that the Aam Aadmi must pay with lives and limbs for the sins of the executive, and without an adequate compensatory law, yet in place, after the British left us with Fatal Accidents Act, 1846, vintage. Shame.

(The writer is a practising advocate in the Madras high court)

Security up outside CM, Dy CM's homes

Chennai: Anticipating protests and sieges at Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami's residence on Greenways Road in Chennai, condemning the Thoothukudi shoot-out, the city police have increased the police deployment at his residence in the city.

The police have also tightened the security at Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam's residence. According to the police sources, the precautionary mea-

sure has been taken after the specific intelligence saying that the members of a few outfits have planned to agitate before their residences. The move has come after 13 protesters were killed in police firing at the anti-Sterlite protest in Thoothukudi. "Following the intelligence, hundreds of police personnel were deployed at the residences. The tight security will be continued until the normalcy restored," a police source said.

Sterlite boss says only annual shutdown, will resume

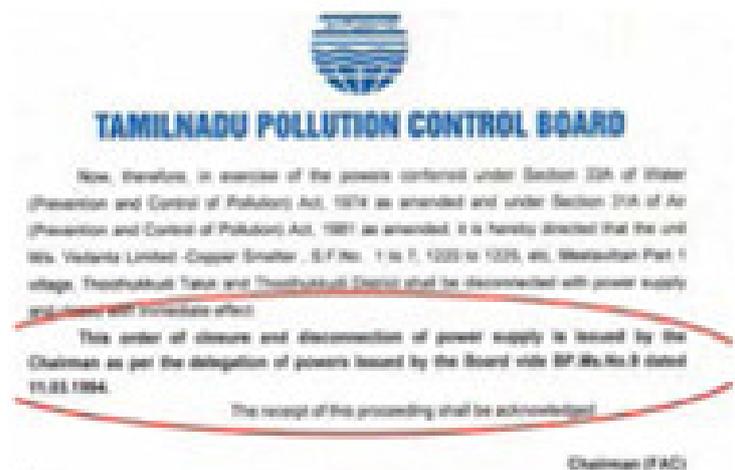
Chennai: Even as the Tamil Nadu Government announced “total shutdown” and snapping of power and water connections to the Sterlite copper smelter unit in Thoothukudi to bring down temperatures, Vedanta chairman Anil Agarwal has created a mini-storm claiming that the plant had only been temporarily shut for ‘annual maintenance’ and would soon resume work. In a video posted on his twitter, Agarwal said the plant was closed “because of annual shutdown” and he was “waiting for clearance from the court and the Government for restarting the plant”. He said he was deeply saddened by the Thoothukudi violence and the loss of lives in police firing. “This was absolutely unfortunate and my full sympathy is with the families”, he said. “We are strictly following what the court and the government orders. We are only making sure that the community and Tuticorin people at large prosper with us, and we are totally committed for the community. With this wish and for their prosperity, we would like to continue with this business. I am fully committed to the environment and development of the people of Tuticorin and Tamil Nadu. We will fully abide by the law of the land”, said the Vedanta boss in his twitter video that has gone viral and is causing quite some excitement, and concern, among the anti-Sterlite protesters down south.

TNPCB ACCUSES STERLITE OF FLOUTING CLOSURE ORDER, CUTS OFF POWER

Chennai: Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board has alleged that Sterlite copper smelter plant at the SIPCOT industrial complex in Thoothukudi “was carrying out activities to resume its production operation” when the environmental engineer carried out inspection of the unit on May 18 and 19, in gross violation of the direction issued by the TNPCB not to resume operation without prior sanction/renewal of consent from the Board.

Following the detection of the violation by the unit, the TNPCB said on Wednesday, it has now ordered “the closure and disconnection of power supply” with immediate effect and directed the TANGEDCO to carry out at once the snapping of power connection to the unit.

The TNPCB directive also recalled that Sterlite application for issue of ‘renewal of consent’ for the years 2018-2023 had been rejected on 04 April, 2018 “due to non-compliance of certain conditions” imposed in the previous



renewal of consent order issued to the unit in September 2017. After that, on April 12, the company was told firmly to resume production operation “without obtaining prior approval/ renewal of consent from the Board”.

However, the Joint Chief Environmental Engineer in Tirunelveli reported to TNPCB that during his inspection of the unit on May 18 and 19, it was found that activities were still on to resume production operation and so “recommended for the issue of direction for closure and discontinuance of power supply to the unit”, said the TNPCB communication ordering the snapping of water supply to the Sterlite unit. —DC

I shall face any case against me: Stalin

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 24

DMK working president who was evicted and later detained for leading a dharna in front of the Chief Minister's chamber in the State Secretariat in the historic Fort St. George on Thursday demanding Chief Minister's resignation in connection with the Thoothukudi police firing incident, said he was ready to face any case registered against him and will "bravely take any bullet" too.

"I shall face any case registered against me. I would bravely take any bullet... the DMK's protest will continue till Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami steps down as he is responsible for the killing of more than 12 people in police firing in Thoothukudi," Mr. Stalin told reporters,

seated in the police van.

High drama was witnessed at the State Secretariat here when the opposition DMK leader Stalin accompanied by his party legislators, boycotting the Business Advisory Committee meeting, suddenly resorted to a dharna outside the Chief Minister's Chamber, demanding the discussion on Thoothukudi police firing incident. They also alleged that Mr. Palaniswami had refused to meet them on the issue. He was bundled out of the Secretariat and detained by the police.

While being taken to a marriage hall in a waiting van, a large number of DMK workers, carrying party flags, thronged the Secretariat condemning the arrests, and raised slogans like "we want justice" and "shame on the govern-

ment" and demanded the resignation of the CM on the Sterlite issue. Normal life on the arterial Kamaraj Salai was affected for nearly 45 minutes due to the flash agitation by the DMK members.

Earlier, Mr. Stalin told reporters that both the DMK and Congress walked out of the BAC meeting because since the last two days Thoothukudi was burning but the CM had not visited the affected families to console them. The CM must resign immediately and police DGP Rajendran must resign. "Though collector and SP were transferred, no action has been taken on these two officials. Trained police officials were brought in mufti to fire at the protesters. This should be investigated by a sitting judge of the high court," he said.



Stalin protesting in front of the Chief Minister's chamber at the secretariat. —DC

Tough SP from hills goes to Thoothukudi

**B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC
OOTY, MAY 24**

The violence in Thoothukudi has also shaken the hills here as Mr. Murali Rambha, popular SP of Nilgiris, an affable yet strict police officer known for his Maoist control measures and tribal outreach, has left the hill-district to take control of the law and order situation in Thoothukudi.

The very fact that Mr. Rambha was instantly chosen to proceed to the violence-marred Thoothukudi showcased that he stood top among his contemporaries in dealing with the tough and challenging situations.

Mr. Rambha, hailing from Andhra Pradesh proved himself to be a tall order IPS officer during his tenure spread over nearly two-and-a-half-years in Nilgiris, is certainly a man of character and kindness. His attitude combining affability with strictness has made him an officer with a difference.

Though initially he struggled a bit in dealing with the traffic issues in the hills, he took all the criticism on his strides and evolved better traffic plans



Murali Rambha

for the Nilgiris in the summer tourist season, besides maintaining law and order in laudable way, that won the accolades.

While the way in which he handled and cracked the dacoity-cum-murder case In Kodanad estate in April 2017 proved his astute “police intelligence”.

Mr. Rambha’s approach to Maoist control measures in the hill borders and reaching out the remote tribal hamlets to orient their minds of tribesmen towards national mainstream would be etched in the annals of Nilgiris policing.

Sterlite: Stir by MDMK man against central forces

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC
NAGAPATTINAM, MAY 24:

A middle-aged MDMK activist created a flutter and his action sparked tension for about four hours after he climbed up a cell phone tower at Vandalur village near here on Thursday, to press the Union government against sending paramilitary forces to Thoothukudi, where police had fired on anti-Sterlite protesters on Tuesday, resulting in the death of at least 12 persons.

Police said the MDMK worker Thilagar of Vandalur all of sudden climbed up the cell phone tower today and condemned the police firing at Thoothukudi on Tuesday and Wednesday, which also injured many others.

On information, Revenue and Police officials rushed to the spot and attempted to persuade him to get down from the cell phone tower. He refused to come down and placed conditions, stating he will relent only if the paramilitary forces and ban order under Section 144 Cr. P.C. and state police forces are withdrawn from Thoothukudi.

Following this, 15 Fire and Rescue department staff climbed up the tower to persuade him to come down.

However, the MDMK party men contacted their general secretary Vaiko over the phone, who in turn persuaded his party worker, enabling his climb-down by the Fire and Rescue department personnel.



MDMK cadre being led away by police official at Vandalur village near Nagapattinam on Thursday.

■ Thoothukudi police firing echo in western zone

Over 85 per cent shops down shutters in Kovai dt

ANANTH MATHIVANAN
I DC
COIMBATORE, MAY 24

Normal life was affected in Coimbatore district on Thursday after 2,000 shops downed shutters in response to the call given by the traders' federation, condemning the police firing at Thoothukudi against anti-Sterlite protesters, while many shops in the city opened after noon.

The violence that broke out in Thoothukudi a couple of days ago led to the death of more 13 persons who took part in the protest, demanding the permanent closure for the Sterlite copper plant there.

The joint forum of Tamil Nadu All Traders Association's president T. Vellaiyan called for downing shutters on Thursday across the state to condemn the police firing at Thoothukudi. In response to the call, many wholesale grocery shops on Range Gounder Street, Uppara Street and Big Bazar Street remained closed for the entire day while a few electrical shops belonging to north Indians remained open on Oppanakara Street. Small scale industries and spare parts shops in Pappanaickenplayam and Avarampalayam remained closed.

More than 85 per cent of grocery shops, hotels, sweet stalls, bakeries, roadside eateries, garment shops in the suburbs including at Mettupalayam, Valparai and Pollachi also remained closed today.

TOUGH SP MURALI RAMBHA GOES TO THOOTHUKUDI

B. RAVICHANDRAN
I DC
OOTY, MAY 24

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Murali Rambha

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Coimbatore Lawyers begin 2-day boycott

DC CORRESPONDENT
COIMBATORE, MAY 24:

Lawyers of Coimbatore started a two-day court boycott on Thursday to condemn the police firing at Thoothukudi.

An emergency lawyer's general body meeting was chaired by president Balakrishnan at the Coimbatore Bar Council on Thursday. A resolution was passed at the meeting to boycott courts for two days

including Thursday, to condemn the police firing in Thoothukudi, and stage a protest in front of the Coimbatore court complex on Friday (May 25) demanding the permanent closure of the Thoothukudi Sterlite Copper plant.

The Association's vice-president Manoharan, secretary Satheesh and treasurer Ravichandran were present during the meeting.



Wholesale grocery shops remained closed at Range-Gounder street in Coimbatore on Thursday condemning the firing at Thoothukudi.

100 DMK CADRES ARRESTED IN CITY

DC CORRESPONDENT
COIMBATORE, MAY 24:

Around 100 cadres belonging to the DMK gathered at their Coimbatore district party office near the North Coimbatore flyover on Thursday afternoon and staged a road-roko near the party office, raising slogans against the police firing at Thoothukudi.

The move came after DMK cadres came to know about the arrest in Chennai of DMK working president

M.K. Stalin after he was evicted from the Secretariat for staging a dharna on Thursday after being denied permission to meet Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami to discuss the Thoothukudi police firing.

The DMK cadres also raised slogans condemning the arrest of Mr. M.K. Stalin and blocked traffic at North Coimbatore junction. Around 100 cadres including three women were arrested following the road-roko.



DMK cadres block the traffic near North Coimbatore on Thursday to protest the police firing at Thoothukudi.

-DC

Two issues bring oppn, TUs to streets

R.VALAYAPATHY | DC
TIRUCHY, MAY 24:

Members of various opposition parties and labour unions including DMK and Congress staged agitations at several places in Central districts of Tiruchy, Karur, Perambalur, Pudukkottai, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts on Thursday, to condemn the police firing at Thoothukudi against the anti-Sterlite agitators, which claimed 13 lives so far and injured several others since Tuesday.

The Congressmen were also protesting against the latest hike in petrol and diesel prices.

The DMK men also held separate agitations by resorting to 'road rokos' at several places in these seven districts, protesting against the arrest of DMK working president M K Stalin, at Chennai on Thursday.

More than 50 DMK volunteers led by party's Tiruchy town secretary M. Anbazhagan were arrested by the police when they resorted to a 'road roko' at the busy central bus stand area at Tiruchy.

However all of them were released later this evening, police added.



Members of the Makkal Marumalarchi Kazhagam block the Coimbatore-Mayiladuthurai Jan Shatabdi express train at Tiruchy railway junction on Thursday. — DC



DMK Volunteers led by party's Tiruchy town Secretary M.Anbazhagan resort to road roko at the busy central bus stand area at Tiruchy on Thursday. — DC

DMK men protest Stalin's arrest over cops firing issue

G.SRINIVASAN | DC
THANJAVUR, MAY 24

The district police arrested 90 members of DMK at Thanjavur on Thursday when they staged demonstrations at two places protesting against the arrest of M.K. Stalin, working president of the DMK at Chennai, and what they alleged failure of Tamil Nadu government to prevent the police firing at Thoothukudi against the anti-Sterlite protesters on Tuesday.

Led by T.K.G. Neelamegam, town secretary, members staged demonstration at old bus stand. They alleged that Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami has not given time for Stalin to meet him but arrested him

during an agitation. Another group of members staged demonstration at new bus stand. (Mr. Stalin was later released in Chennai).

At Kumbakonam town, the police arrested 80 members of the DMK including women when they staged a demonstration near the fish market. K. Anbalagan MLA, and Suba Thamizhahagan, town secretary, led the agitation.

BUSES DAMAGED IN STONE-PELTING

Unidentified persons pelted stones and damaged the front windscreen of three transport corporation buses on Wednesday night in Kumbakonam area allegedly protesting against police firing at Thoothukudi.

According to the police, windscreen of the Thanjavur-Chennai transport corporation bus was damaged at Sundaraperumal Koil by two unidentified persons who came on a motorbike. They covered their faces with clothes and threw stones at the bus and fled the place. Udhayakumar, driver of the bus lodged a complaint with Swamimalai police.

Another bus bound for Chennai from Thanjavur was also damaged at Papanasam by unidentified persons. Papanasam police registered a case. Kumbakonam-Mayiladuthurai state transport corporation bus was damaged near Narasinganpettai.

Thiruvaidaimaruthur police have registered a case.

NATION, CURRENT AFFAIRS**Tamil Nadu seeks permanent closure of Vedanta's copper smelter, say officials****REUTERS**

Published May 25, 2018, 10:17 am IST

Updated May 25, 2018, 10:19 am IST

Residents and environmental activists say emissions from the plant have largely affected people's health and are polluting air and water.

Earlier on Thursday, authorities cut power to Vedanta's copper smelter. (Photo: File)

Thoothukudi: Tamil Nadu said on Thursday that it was seeking a permanent closure of a big copper smelter run by London-listed Vedanta Resources after 13 people died in protests demanding the closure of the plant on environmental grounds.

"The government's position is very clear, it doesn't want the plant to run," said Sandeep Nanduri, the top official of the district where the plant is located, after a meeting with senior state government officials.

Other state officials confirmed the government's position.

On Tuesday, police opened fire on protesters demanding that the smelter in the port city of Thoothukudi be shut down. In all, 13 protesters have been killed this week.

Residents and environmental activists say emissions from the plant, India's second biggest, are polluting the air and water, affecting people's health.

Earlier on Thursday, authorities cut the power to the smelter. The pollution control board of Tamil Nadu said the smelter, which was shut pending renewal of its operating license, was found last week to be preparing to resume production without permission.

On Thursday, Vedanta's Indian stock closed down 2 per cent.

A company spokesman did not immediately respond to a Reuters' email seeking comment on Tamil Nadu's closure plan and the allegation that it had been preparing to resume production without approvals. Vedanta has previously denied that the smelter has been polluting the air and water.

"The issue of renewal of consent for the year 2018-2023 has been rejected ... due to non-compliance of certain conditions," the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) said in an order dated Wednesday.

It did not elaborate on the conditions the smelter had not met but said it "shall be disconnected with power supply and closed with immediate effect".

The agency told Vedanta it could not resume operations without permission.

The plant has already been shut for more than 50 days and had been ordered to stay closed until at least June 6, pending environmental clearances.

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Government clear on no room for Sterlite: Collector

TNN | May 25, 2018, 12.44 AM IST



The Tamil Nadu government is very clear on not wanting the Sterlite plant operating in Tuticorin, district collector Sandeep Nanduri said, adding that power and water supply to the unit were suspended.

"The government is not willing to give the clearance and does not want the unit to operate in the city. This main demand of the public has been met with as clearly stated by the chief minister in the press meet this (Thursday) morning," he said.

After peace committee meetings with various stakeholders of the city, the collector along with the monitoring officers Gagandeep Singh Bedi and PWC Davidar, south zone IG Shailesh Kumar Yadav and SP Murali Lamba,

ascertained the number of persons killed in the violence as 13, those who sustained serious injuries as 19 and those injured as 102 totally. As many as 34 police personnel including policewomen were also injured, he added.

Restoring normalcy was priority, he said, adding that all steps were being taken to ensure people had supply of essential commodities. Special water tankers will cater to the needs in Tuticorin government hospital, where there were large crowds and the Amma unavagam near the GH would work open 24 x7. Vegetables have arrived from Madurai, the collector said, adding that orders were sent out to keep ration shops open. Hotel owners have agreed to open for business from Friday. He also added that while bus services have resumed in rural areas, services in city would be introduced only after close assessment of the situation.

TAMIL NADU

Father of victim asked to wait till Thursday to receive body

Mohamed Imranullah S.

CHENNAI, MAY 26, 2018 00:00 IST

HC wants to check whether autopsy was done properly

The Madras High Court on Friday asked the father of one of the 13 people shot dead during this week's Thoothukudi police firing to wait till Thursday (May 31) for receiving the body of the deceased since the court wants to ascertain whether the post-mortem had been performed in accordance with Supreme Court guidelines.

A Division Bench of Justices T. Ravindran and P. Velmurugan told the counsel for S. Balaiah (67), father of B. Shanmugam, a MBA graduate who was killed during Tuesday's violence, that the bodies of the 13 victims could be handed over to their families only after the court was satisfied that post-mortem had been conducted properly.

Passing interim orders in a public interest litigation petition filed jointly by three lawyers, the Bench had on Wednesday directed the State government to preserve the bodies till May 30 and file a detailed report on post-mortem conducted since the petitioners had sought for re post-mortem in the presence of victims' representatives.

In his affidavit seeking return of the body, Mr. Balaiah said that his son was supervising civil works carried out in their house at Teachers Colony in Thoothukudi on Tuesday when the labourers required money for purchasing construction materials. Immediately, he went to an ATM at the Collector's office to draw money.

Stating that Shanmugam was unaware of the agitation under way, the petitioner said that he took shelter on seeing people running helter-skelter during the violent protests, demanding closure of Sterlite copper smelter plant due to environmental concerns, and called his mother on the phone around

12.45 p.m. to apprise her of the situation.

She advised him to take care and he, in turn, promised to return home as soon as possible.

“At around 1.25 p.m., my niece Subbulakshmi contacted my son’s mobile on hearing about the violence through television channels. The call was attended by an unidentified woman who asked her to come immediately to the Government Hospital.

Blood-stained bag

“We went to the hospital and went ward after ward looking for our son. A nurse showed us a blood-stained bag of my son. When we identified the bag, she directed us to the mortuary where we saw my son’s body,” the petitioner said and sought the body at the earliest so as to perform the last rites.

Pointing out that officials expressed their inability to hand over the body to him due to interim orders passed by the court, the petitioner said they also obtained a letter from him in order to show it to the court seeking modification of the interim order and thereafter hand over the body to the family.

“In my grief, I did not even read the letter completely but affixed my signature... I understand that the letter indicates that my son also participated in the agitation against Sterlite on May 22, 2018. I submit that to the best of my knowledge, my son was not involved in any protest or agitation but was a victim of police firing only by reason of being at the wrong place at the wrong time,” the petitioner had added.

He was a victim of police firing only by reason of being at the wrong place at the wrong time

Petitioner

Tamil Nadu CM says Sterlite will be shut



MAY 25, 2018 00:00 IST

The Board took cognisance of an application made by Vedanta seeking renewal of the Consent To Operate (CTO) and the rejection of the application in April by the Board for non compliance of certain conditions under the previous CTO.

Responding to the action, Vedanta, in a statement, said it has not operated the copper smelter plant since March 27. “We continue to work with the regulatory authorities, at all time ensuring compliance with the necessary regulations,” the firm said.

Meanwhile, efforts were being taken to restore normalcy in the district though the opposition has called for a State-wide bandh on Friday. Internet access remained suspended for a second day in three southern districts causing hardship to local people, particularly students attempting to submit online applications for various examinations and admission forms.

HC seeks State's response to plea for CBI probe

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, MAY 26, 2018 00:00 IST

Directs Home Secretary to consider providing medical aid to the injured

The Madras High Court on Friday sought the response of the State government, by May 30, to a public interest litigation petition seeking a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the death of 13 people in this week's Thoothukudi police firing incident on the ground that Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami "had given a clean certificate of good conduct" to the police and exonerated them from any wrongdoing.

A Division Bench of Justices T. Ravindran and P. Velmurugan also passed an interim order directing the Home Secretary to consider a representation given by the PIL petitioner, A.P. Suryaprakasam, 65, on Thursday seeking treatment for the injured in private hospitals at State cost besides lifting the ban on provision of internet services in Thoothukudi as well as the contiguous Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari districts.

During the course of hearing of the case, the petitioner contended that it would only be appropriate for an independent agency such as the CBI to probe the incident, especially when the Chief Minister, holding the Home portfolio, appeared to be backing the policemen involved in the incident.

Normalcy restored

Later, when the judges wanted to know whether Thoothukudi had returned to normalcy after the firing incidents on Tuesday and Wednesday, Additional Advocate General Narmadha Sampath said: "Normalcy has been restored to the fullest."

In his affidavit, the petitioner contended that the firing was nothing but a brutal murder of 13 unarmed innocent people, including three women, with the use of snipers. "It is unfortunate that people were slaughtered as if they were dangerous animals. The trigger-happy policemen used their arms as a shooting practice to kill the civilians. This incident clearly proves that the Supreme Court guidelines in the famous D.K. Basu's case had been nakedly violated," he said.

TAMIL NADU

It was intelligence failure in Thoothukudi, says Vasana

STAFF REPORTER

COIMBATORE, MAY 26, 2018 00:00 IST

Intelligence failure led to arson and rioting and the death of 13 persons in police firing in Thoothukudi on May 22 and 23, and the State Government is to be held responsible for these, Tamil Nadu Congress leader G.K. Vasana has said.

Addressing reporters at the Coimbatore airport on Friday, he said the Central and State governments should take steps to close down the Sterlite copper smelting plant in Thoothukudi and this demand was beyond politics. Accusing the State Government of being insensitive to people's wishes, Mr. Vasana said his party would create awareness among the people on the necessity of closing the plant.

Normalcy and law and order should be restored in Thoothukudi, as the curfew-like situation affected the common people.

To a question on the rising fuel prices, he said the Central Government should be held accountable for it. He wanted State Government to reduce the value added tax on petrol and diesel.

He also appealed to the Central and State governments to bring fuel under the Goods and Services Tax.

High Court asks review committee to meet today



B. Tilak Chandar

MADURAI, MAY 26, 2018 00:00 IST

Govt. tells court that internet services have been restored in two districts

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Friday, hearing a batch of public interest litigation petitions filed following the recent Thoothukudi violence which left at least 13 dead and many injured, gave directions to be taken to restore normalcy in the region.

A Division Bench of Justices D. Krishnakumar and R. Suresh Kumar directed the review committee comprising the Chief Secretary, the Law Secretary and the Public Secretary to conduct a meeting on Saturday to assess the situation, particularly with regard to restoring the internet services in Thoothukudi.

The court took cognisance of the fact that the Internet services in Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari were restored. Additional Advocate-General K. Chellapandian told the court that the ban on internet would be in place till May 27 in Thoothukudi.

Medical, legal aid

The court directed the State government to consider the petitioners' plea, which sought the enhancement of compensation for victims of police firing.

The District Legal Services Authority of Thoothukudi was directed to verify and assess the medical treatment provided to the injured at the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital. If the medical assistance was not sufficient, then steps should be taken to shift the injured to the Government Rajaji Hospital in Madurai or any private hospitals in Madurai for treatment, the court said.

The District Legal Services Authority should provide legal assistance to the needy. A panel of advocates shall be appointed and monitored by the Principal District Judge and the Chief Judicial Magistrate of Thoothukudi for legal

SC refuses to hear plea

Legal Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 26, 2018 00:00 IST

A Vacation Bench of the Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a petition seeking a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into the deaths in police firing during an anti-Sterlite protest in Thoothukudi on Tuesday. It said the petitioner could press his plea again on Monday, before the next Vacation Bench.

The next Vacation Bench would comprise Justices L. Nageswara Rao and Mohan M. Shantanagoudar, who will preside for a week from May 28.

TAMIL NADU

Kin of police firing victims in Thoothukudi shaken, angry



J. Praveen Paul Joseph

THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 26, 2018 00:00 IST

The dead include a 17-year-old Class X11 student, a budding boxer and two men who had nothing to do with the anti-Sterlite agitation

Three days after police firing on anti-Sterlite Copper protesters in Thoothukudi, kin of the deceased remain shaken and angry.

Family members of J. Snowlin, a 17-year-old class XII student, killed in the firing, recalled that she was vociferous during the protests and had challenged the police while taking part in the massive procession that was heading towards the Collectorate on the fateful day. A resident of Lion's Town, Snowlin was the youngest protester to pay with her life.

“It was almost like she was leading a group of people in the huge crowd,” her elder brother, Godwin, who works as a seaman in Saudi Arabia, said. The

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only girl in the family, Snowlin, a Law degree aspirant, was the darling of her siblings and parents, and had voluntarily participated in the protest.

“She had dared the police who attempted to block the procession at V.V.D. Signal. She told them that the fight against Sterlite Copper was to protect the family members of the police too from the pollution,” he said.

Stating that the family was not after the Rs. 10 lakh compensation or job announced by the State, he said their only demand was permanent closure of the plant.

“We do not believe in the lip service of the Chief Minister, who has spoken about permanent closure of the industry. We will not accept Snowlin’s body till the plant is closed forever,” Mr. Godwin said.

For S. Maniraj (34), who owned an electrical store, his attempt to go to meet his wife who was at his in-law’s place, proved fatal.

“He got married only three months ago. He was going from our house in Damodaran Nagar Main Road to meet his wife, Petchiammal alias Anusia at Anna Nagar, when he was caught in the crowd of the procession. We were shocked to hear about his death,” said his younger brother, Ramesh Kannan.

‘Shot like sparrows’

Mr. Kannan said that the police had shot down people like sparrows and demanded strong action against the then Collector and SP, who have been transferred.

Another victim B. Ranjith Kumar (22) of Puspha Nagar, a boxer, had left home with his friend on May 22 to never return. “We did not know where he was heading. We thought it was one of his routine outings. But, to our shock we heard about his death,” his father, Baskar, a building contractor said.

He fondly recalled that his son, a diploma holder, was the district coordinator of blood donation club and had received two awards in recognition for his social service.

J. Antony Selvaraj (47) had gone out to meet his wife at Teachers’s Colony but fell prey to the bullet. “Some people had torched police vehicles and the police shot down my son, who had nothing to do with the protest or violence,”

said Josph Stalin, his father. “The Chief Minister should take moral responsibility for killing an innocent person. This government should be dismissed,” he said.

A 48-year-old woman Jansi (48) was killed with a bullet piercing through her skull at Threspuram “Her husband Jesubalan, a fisherman, is not able to speak due to the shock,” said their neighbour, S. Malliga. The woman has left behind three daughters, including two teens and a son.

“The couple never participated in any protest. After all the rioting in Collectorate and shooting, the police came here claiming that only fishermen from Threspuram were behind the violence at Collectorate and started beating people,” she said.

TAMIL NADU

Monitoring Officers review situation



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 26, 2018 00:00 IST

Gagandeep Singh Bedi, P.W.C. Davidar take stock of steps being taken to restore peace in Thoothukudi

Monitoring Officers Gagandeep Singh Bedi and P.W.C. Davidar, who held negotiations with the representatives of various associations on Thursday night to bring back normalcy in the port town, visited Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital and reviewed steps being taken to restore peace.

After visiting the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital on Friday morning, Mr. Bedi and Mr. Davidar interacted with the riot victims undergoing treatment there and enquired about the progress of their health with the doctors. After visiting the Aavin milk booth near old bus stand, the senior civil servants said the public could call 94426 22232 for delivery of Aavin milk at

their doorstep.

Collector Sandeep Nanduri, who checked the quality of subsidised food being served at Amma Unavagam at the hospital, asked the Corporation officials to serve food, tea and biscuits to the visitors free of cost for the next three days.

Mr. Sandeep also visited the Farm Fresh vegetable outlet near new bus stand and asked the officials to ensure adequate procurement of vegetables to serve the public. “If people want to register complaints, they can call 94864 54714 or 0461 2340101 or 1077,” Mr. Sandeep said, adding that 52 riot victims had been given Rs. 1.04 crore as compensation.

'Those who gave nod for Sterlite are anti-socials'



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 26, 2018 00:00 IST

Those who gave the permission for establishing and operating the Sterlite Copper smelter in Thoothukudi, and not the protesters, were the anti-social elements, CPI national secretary K. Narayana and farmer-leader R. Nallakannu said here on Friday.

Speaking to reporters, Mr. Narayana said Thoothukudi had been transformed into a 'ghost town' after the riots [which broke out during the anti-Sterlite agitation], during which the police "hunted down the protesters like extremists by shooting them on the head and the chest." The families of the deceased should be provided Rs. 1 crore each as compensation, as the police had

violated all the rules while controlling the crowd. Those who had been injured in the violence should be given Rs. 50 lakh each, he said.

“The Chief Minister had described the protesters as anti-socials. For me, those who gave permission for establishing and operating Sterlite Copper are the anti-social elements,” Mr. Narayana said.

Mr. Nallakannu said the police had killed the protesters who had organised their anti-Sterlite agitation for 100 days in a peaceful manner. There wouldn't have been bloodshed, had the Ministers and the officials held talks with the protesters, he added.

“While the Sterlite Copper's administration says the plant has been closed down for maintenance, the State government claims steps had been taken for the closure. How can we believe this government?” Mr. Nallakanu asked.

TAMIL NADU

Legal aid cell opened at Thoothukudi hospital

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 26, 2018 00:00 IST

The District Legal Services Authority has inaugurated a legal aid cell on the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital premises to help riot victims and their relatives.

As 86 riot victims are undergoing treatment at the hospital, their relatives are thronging the hospital round-the-clock and relatives of the deceased are waiting indefinitely to receive the bodies after the post-mortem. Since they are in need of legal assistance in the riot-hit Thoothukudi, the legal aid cell has been opened near the main entrance of the TMCH.

Twenty advocates, including women lawyers, will give legal assistance.

“We’ll extend legal assistance to the relatives of the riot victims and those who were arrested in connection with the riots,” said R. Samuel Benjamin, Sub-Judge, Thoothukudi District Legal Services Authority.

Tense moments in Karungulam as government bus set ablaze



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 26, 2018 00:00 IST

A government bus was set on fire in Thoothukudi on Friday, triggering panic at a time when the port town was limping back to normalcy following the death of 13 people in police firing during the anti-Sterlite agitation.

The incident occurred at Karungulam under the Seythunganallur police station limits in the district. Sudalaikannu, 70, and Valliammal, 65, of Meignanapuram and Jebakumar, 25, of Karaikudi sustained burns in the attack, the police said. They were rushed to the Primary Health Centre in Karungulam.

Police sources said three unidentified, bike-laden youth intercepted the bus near the Karungulam Bridge and threatened the driver, Ramesh, to get down from the vehicle.

As the miscreants boarded the bus with a plastic container filled with petrol, the passengers sensed the impending danger and fled. The youth then doused the vehicle with fuel and set it ablaze.

Subsequently, Superintendent of Police Murali Rambha visited the spot.

Barring this incident, normalcy was gradually being restored in the riot-hit town.

While most of the major business establishments remained closed on Friday, sweet shops, fruit stalls and bakeries were open for business, as were a good number of roadside tea shops and pharmacies.

Though buses were being operated to Tirunelveli and Madurai with police protection after a gap of three days, the patronage was very low, with residents still fearful of outbreaks of violence. As dusk fell, the bus services were stopped over security concerns.

Mini buses, share autos and auto rickshaws also kept off the roads.

CM's announcement on closure an eyewash: Vaiko



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

TIRUNELVELI, MAY 26, 2018 00:00 IST

Warns he would lay siege to factory

Terming Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami's statement on the closure of Sterlite Copper an eyewash, Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK) leader Vaiko has warned that he would mobilise people to lay siege to Sterlite Copper if either the government or the court permitted it to continue to operate.

Speaking to reporters here on Friday after courting arrest during a protest at

the Tirunelveli junction against the killing of 13 persons in police firing during the anti-Sterlite agitation in Thoothukudi, Mr. Vaiko said Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami's assertion that his government would not support any project that was being opposed by the public was an eyewash. The disconnection of water and power supply to Sterlite Copper could not be viewed as a first step towards its permanent closure, he added. "If Mr. Palaniswami was really serious about ensuring the closure of this unit, he should have visited Thoothukudi and met the victims of the riot," Mr. Vaiko said.

Pointing out that he had been protesting against Sterlite Copper since 1996, the MDMK leader said he had been arrested on six occasions for staging protests against the copper manufacturing unit. "I will mobilise a few lakh people and lay siege to Sterlite Copper to ensure its permanent closure," he said.

The people, who were protesting peacefully against the copper manufacturing unit, were hunted down by the police mercilessly, with the objective of crushing the ongoing "people's protest" against Sterlite Copper, he said.

"While 13 protesters were killed in police firing, no policeman lost his life in the violence, as the protesters were not carrying weapons. Hence, it [the police firing] is a pre-planned murder, which cannot be justified by any means," Mr. Vaiko said.

On the deployment of paramilitary forces in riot-hit Thoothukudi, the MDMK general secretary warned Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Rajnath Singh against such a move. "If you dare to deploy the paramilitary forces to crush the people's protest and save Sterlite Copper, the situation will worsen and yield adverse results," he said.

BUSINESS

Vedanta shares slump 6% after T.N. protests

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI, MAY 24, 2018 00:00 IST

Shares of Vedanta fell 6% on Wednesday amid reports that 11 people were killed in police firing after protests against Vedanta's Sterlite Copper plant turned violent at Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu.

After opening the day on a weak note, the stock further lost 5.8% to Rs. 253.85 on the BSE.

On the NSE, shares dropped 6% to Rs. 253.75.

The protests have been going on in Thoothukudi for more than three months now, but violence erupted on Tuesday with agitators fighting pitched battles with police.



A Raja of DMK, then Union Environment minister, had given permission to increase the manufacturing capacity of Sterlite plant to 900 tonnes from 391 tonnes even as the then State government had banned its expansion

S Ramadoss, PMK founder



The police had opened fire on peaceful anti-Sterlite protesters who had marched towards the collectorate. The protesters had not set afire any vehicles on the collectorate premises, but the police put the blame on them

Vaiko



A government that is elected by the public should engage in preventive measures or in resolution through dialogue. Resorting to lathicharge and firing that leads to loss of lives only shows the fascist nature

S Thirunavukkarasar, TNCC president

CRAWLING TOWARDS NORMALCY

Defying the bandh call given by the Opposition parties, shops resumed operation; vendors did brisk business as essential-starved residents thronged market to stock up after three days; officials into overdrive to ensure water, milk to the town; police presence beefed up to ensure things remain calm



Vegetables sold like hot cakes on a day shops reopened after a three-day hiatus | V KARTHIKALAGU

Govt response on CBI probe plea sought

Chennai: A vacation bench of the Madras High Court ordered notice to CBI on a PIL praying for an investigation into the police firing at Thoothukudi. Justices T Ravindran and P Velmurugan issued the directive at a special sitting at the principal seat. The bench was passing interim orders on a PIL from A P Suryaprakasam. It also directed the State Home secretary to respond appropriately to the petitioner. The matter will be taken up on May 30

CPI questions Sterlite's statement

Thoothukudi: Claiming that the owner of Sterlite copper smelter had said that the facility had been closed only for maintenance, veteran CPI leader Nallakannu questioned the credibility of K Palaniswami's statement, which assured the public that government has taken steps to close the firm. "Whose statement should we believe, Anil Agarwal's or CM's. Can CM give a reply to Anil Agarwal's statement? The government should take steps to permanently close the facility," Nallakannu said

CPM protest seeking sacking of officials

Thoothukudi: Students Federation of India (SFI), Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) and All Indian Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), affiliated to CPM, staged a road roko on Friday against the police action on the anti-Sterlite protesters. The protesters demanded that the State government sack officials responsible for the police action that left over 10 people dead and several injured. Similar protests were reported from Madurai too.



Gutted remains of a bus set on fire by a mob | V KARTHIKALAGU

Police presence will be scaled down once normalcy returns, says Bedi

'COPS HERE TO ENSURE PEACE'

Bedi, secretary of Agriculture department, here on special duty as an overseer of the rescue and peace efforts, maintained that the police presence was beefed up in the region not to intimidate the residents, but to ensure peace was not violated. Bedi said that supply of milk and other daily need items were being streamlined. "Around 11,500 litres of Aavin milk is being supplied everyday to the town and the corporation staff have started removing trash and charred remains from the roads," Bedi added

Normalcy is returning. Shops are getting opened, buses have started plying between Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Madurai. Town buses also have resumed operation

PWC Davidar

C ARUVEL RAJ @ Thoothukudi

While the bandh call given by the Opposition parties received a lukewarm response across the State, the epicentre of the turmoil in Thoothukudi was slowly inching back to normalcy on Friday.

While partial resumption of bus services was recorded in the region, shopkeepers tentatively opened their establishments. However, apprehension was writ large on the faces of the residents, who questioned the heavy deployment and presence of police personnel in the town.

Allaying fears of the residents, the State government's crisis-manager Gagandeep Bedi assured that the police presence would be scaled down if the town remained calm and cooperated with the district administration in maintaining peace.

Bedi, secretary of Agriculture department, here on special duty as an overseer of the rescue and peace efforts, maintained that the police presence was beefed up in the region not to intimidate the residents, but to ensure peace

was not violated.

Bedi said that supply of milk and other daily need items were being streamlined. "Around 11,500 litres of Aavin milk is being supplied everyday to the town and the corporation staff have started removing trash and charred remains from the roads," Bedi added.

Bedi, PWC Davidar and the new collector Sandeep Nandhuri held a meeting with officials at the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital (TMCH) for the second day and took stock of the situation. Speaking to the reporters, Davidar appealed to the traders to bring the town back to normal.

"Normalcy is returning. Shops are getting opened, buses have started plying between Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Madurai. Town buses also have resumed operation," he said.

On being asked about ATMs running out of cash, he said, "By Saturday, the issue will be addressed."

When asked whether any talks will be arranged with public, Davidar responded that all important things will be done in a phased manner.

Collector directed to ensure essential commodities are made available

BATCH OF 10 PETITIONS ADMITTED

Admitting a batch of 10 public interest litigations filed from various quarters, including advocates, a Bench comprising Justices D Krishnakumar and R Suresh Kumar directed the newly-appointed Thoothukudi collector to hold a review meeting on Saturday (today) morning to consider revoking the temporary ban on internet connectivity in the district. The State government was asked to consider enhancing the compensation giving to the victims and the injured undergoing treatment at various hospitals



The District Legal Service Authorities were also directed to form a panel of lawyers and to provide legal assistance to the people who were arrested/ remanded/detained

Sources

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Madurai

DIRECTING the State government to file a reply on police opening fire on anti-Sterlite protesters, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court directed the Thoothukudi collector to ensure complete normalcy in the district. The collector was told to make available essential commodities and transport facilities to the residents.

Admitting a batch of 10 public interest litigations filed from various quarters, including advocates, a Bench comprising Justices D Krishnakumar and R Suresh Kumar directed the newly-appointed Thoothukudi collector to hold a review meeting on Saturday (today) morning to consider revoking the temporary ban on internet services in the district.

The State government was asked to consider enhancing the compensation giving to the victims and the injured.

Further, the division bench directed the Thoothukudi District Legal Service Authorities to verify the actual matrix in the treat-

ment given to the injured and to arrange necessary treatment to survivors at Madurai Government Rajaji Hospital or any other private super-specialty hospital, if needed.

The District Legal Service Authorities were also directed to form a panel of lawyers and provide legal assistance to the people who were arrested/ remanded/ detained.

The Court directed the Thoothukudi District Judge and Chief Judicial Magistrate to monitor the inspection of the legal service authorities.

The Court sought a comprehensive compliance report from the legal service authorities on June 6.

The litigants approached the Court with various prayers, including transferring the investigation of shoot out incident to CBI, file a case under section 302 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) against the police personnel, revoke the temporary ban on the internet connectivity imposed in Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Kanniyakumari districts, enhance the compensation announced for the victims and deceased.

Thoothukudi slowly gets back on its feet

GODSON WISELY DAAS @ Thoothukudi

THE coastal city took tentative steps towards normalcy on a day the bandh call by Opposition parties received a lukewarm response. Friday saw around 40 per cent shops in the town resuming business with essential commodity-starved residents making a beeline. Shops at Palayakayal, Authoor, Arumuganeri, Kayalpattinam, Tiruchendur and Srivaikuntam on the town's periphery remained open since morning.

While a semblance of normalcy was restored to the city, it remained a pale shadow of its former self. The decision to open the shops came after a hurried meeting of a peace committee, comprising community leaders, traders and district authorities at the Superintendent office.

Saying that the locals had been knocking at his doors for supplies, Pakiyaraj, a grocer from Housing Board, said, "With the tension easing a bit, it was only a matter of time before I opened my shop." Vendors selling milk, vegetables and other essentials were seen doing brisk business on the streets of the town, where tension prevailed in the aftermath of the police firing on Tuesday.

Friday being a 'mugurtham' day, many couples tied the knot in low-

key functions, in which the participation of invitees was thin. The outstation relatives and friends largely skipped the events. P Selwin, a groom from KTC Nagar, told *Express* that his relatives from peripheral areas and other districts did not attend his function.

The TNSTC resumed bus services to select areas in Kovilpatti, Madurai and Tirunelveli on the moribund routes after three days. Town buses were operated on Eral, Chekkarakudi and Tiruchendur routes. According to TNSTC Divisional Manager Samudram, over 20 buses were operated under police escort. Buses from Madurai and Coimbatore also reached Thoothukudi, he said.

With the town inching towards normalcy, devotees have started padayatra to the Tiruchendur Temple for Vaikasi Visakam, one of the more famous festivals in southern districts, slated for Monday.

State government's crisis manager Gagandeep Singh Bedi, PWC Davidar and the new district collector Sandeep Nanduri held a meeting with officials at the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital (ThMCH) for the second day and took stock of the situation. ATMs that are running dry of cash is expected to be filled by Saturday. Normal bus services too are expected by Sunday. **P6**



Life is slowly inching towards normalcy in Thoothukudi. | V KARTHIK ALAGU

ENSURE NORMALCY: HC TO COLLECTOR

Directing the State government to file a reply on the police firing during the anti-Sterlite protest, the Madras High Court Bench in Madurai directed the Thoothukudi district collector to ensure that complete normalcy returns to the district soon. It also directed district collector to make available essential commodities and transport services to the people.

'PRESENCE OF COPS NOT TO INTIMIDATE'

State government's crisis-manager Gagandeep Singh Bedi assured that the police presence would be scaled down if the town remained calm and cooperated with the district administration in maintaining peace. Bedi, secretary of agriculture department maintained that the police presence was beefed up in the region not to intimidate the residents, but to ensure peace was not violated.

FACE OF TRAVELLING

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

Sat, 26 May 2018

epaper.newindianexpress.com/c/28985391



Fell to police bullets after attending friend's funeral

ARUVEL RAJ C @Thoothukudi

IT was an emotional day for Maniraj (35) from Damodharan Nagar as he was attending the funeral of his friend S Thangadurai, who died out of eye cancer allegedly caused by the Sterlite copper smelter plant. But he had no idea that his obituary poster would be glued next to his friend's in the next few hours. He was one among the 13 victims who were shot dead in police firing on Tuesday last.

Maniraj had got married just two and half months ago and his widow Anusiya is pregnant now. Unable to bear the tragic death of her husband, Anusiya swooned multiple times during the past two days.

Family members remember Maniraj as a teetotaler and a workaholic. He had been running an electrical gadget shop at Bryant Nagar. "He was always focused on his work and never refused to take up a job, even if it was a minor one. Just two hours after he took part in Thangadurai's funeral, we received a phone call informing us that my brother was shot dead," S Jeyakumar, elder brother of Maniraj told *Express*.

According to Maniraj's family members, he did not intend to go to the protest at first, but later relented to a friend's request. "After attending Thangadurai's funeral,



Maniraj's obituary (right) beside Thangadurai's. Maniraj had returned after attending the latter's funeral, only to fall to the police firing | **V KARTHICKALAGU**

he came home and played with his sister's children. A phone call came and he left without even taking food," Jeyakumar added.

Maniraj's younger brother Ramesh Kannan (31) said, "I was watching news and came to know that two persons were shot dead. I learnt only later that my brother was one of the victims."

The family was also allegedly assaulted by police when they were waiting in front of ThMCH mortuary to see Maniraj's body. "I was attacked with baton while waiting to see my brother's body," Jeyakumar said.

The family members are deeply disturbed as they suspect that a local policeman, who also happens to be the regular customer of Maniraj, was the one who shot him during the firing.

"My brother's shop is close to the police quarters. We heard that policeman shot my brother. He regularly visits my brother's shop for recharging mobile balance and my brother even did some electrical work for his house. We also heard that there was a friction between them as the cop had payment dues," Kannan told *Express*.



EYE IN THE SKY

A drone brought into use by police officials to keep a close watch on the developments in Thoothukudi

41 MLD

Protected drinking water has been supplied to households, hospitals and ThMCH. Public can lodge their grievances through 94864 54714, 0461-2340101 and 1077 and actions will be taken swiftly, he added. Over 52 victims of the police firing have been disbursed with ₹1.4 crore of welfare assistance from Chief Minister's Relief Fund, he further said. Sub collector MS Prashanth was present

Call 9442622232 for milk delivery

MEETING NEED

Thoothukudi: Taking stock of the situation, district collector Sandeep Nanduri said that the adequate steps have been taken to meet public necessity. The public can also contact the given phone numbers for home delivery of milk and complain unavailability of other essential commodities, he added. Nanduri was accompanied by Agriculture Secretary Gagandeep Singh Bedi and Transport Secretary PWC Davidar, the monitoring officers deputed by the State government. Nanduri said that all Amma Unavagam outlets have been opened to distribute free food and tea. Over 13,000 litre of milk has been supplied through Avvin. Public can call 94426 22232 for home delivery.

Officials into overdrive

WORKS ON

Thoothukudi: Nanduri visited vegetable market and old market and asked traders and merchants to run shops in order to cooperate with the district administration to put and end to the public apprehension. He checked the vegetable stock at the government owned Farm Fresh outlet on Ettayapuram road and said that public can purchase vegetables throughout the day. He visited the in-patient wards at Thoothukudi medical college hospital (ThMCH) and enquired about the quality of the treatment given. After briefing the status of the in-patients with ThMCH Dean Dr Lalitha, the collector told press persons that in order to maintain health and hygiene, as many as 954 workers, 250 conservancy workers, have been deployed.



Oppn-sponsored bandh passes off peacefully, normal life slightly hit

Buses, trains operate normally; city roads witness less traffic; some shops down shutters

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Chennai

NORMAL life was slightly disrupted in several parts of the city as a large number of shops downed shutters on Friday in response to a call for State-wide bandh by opposition parties to condemn the police firing at anti-Sterlite protesters, which claimed 13 lives.

The impact of the 12 hour-bandh was visible in commercial areas including T Nagar, Old Washermenpet, Broadway, Tondiarpet, Purasawalkam, Vepery and Kodambakkam. More than 80 per cent of the shops remain closed in these areas. Ranganathan street and North Usman Road in T Nagar wore a deserted look since morning.

The Koyambedu vegetable market functioned with less than 10 shops remaining open. Similarly, other smaller markets in Ayanavaram, Nammalwarpet, Kilpauk, Broadway and Chintadripet also remained shut mostly. The closure of grocery shops and hotels badly affected people.

"There was only one vegetarian hotel which remained open at Vepery and it ran out of food by 3 pm. Due to this, I travelled upto

Commercial areas hit

The impact of the 12 hour-bandh was visible in commercial areas including T Nagar, Old Washermenpet, Broadway, Tondiarpet, Purasawalkam, Vepery and Kodambakkam. More than 80 per cent of the shops remain closed in these areas



DMK leader and MP Kanimozhi, VCK chief Thol Thirumavalavan and other opposition leaders staging a protest at Egmore railway station on Friday | P JAWAHAR

Kilpauk to have lunch," said Karthick of Nammalwarpet.

Though public services such as buses and trains operated normally, many buses carried only a few passengers. City roads also witnessed lesser traffic compared to other days. There were lesser number of vehicles on EVR Periyar Salai (Poonamallee High Road), Anna Salai, Old Mahabalipuram Road and East Coast Road.

At a few places including Tondiarpet and Korukkupet, members of DMK and CPM asked shops to down their shutters. Stones were also reportedly hurled at a few shops. Shops on city's outskirts such as Keelkattalai, Sholinganallur, Semmanchery and Thorapakkam remain closed throughout the day.

LEADERS COURT ARREST

Chennai: Leaders of opposition parties, including DMK working president MK Stalin, MDMK general secretary Vaiko, VCK leader Thol Thirumavalavan and DMK MP Kanimozhi courted arrest on Friday after staging protests condemning the police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi. Along with a large number of partymen, Stalin staged a road blockade at Madurantakam in Kancheepuram district, after presiding over a wedding. Amid sloganeering and resistance, police whisked him away before clearing DMK cadre who encircled the van carrying him. Rajya Sabha member RS Bharathi and MLAs, including CVMP Ezhilarasan and RT Arasu, were also held by police. Kanimozhi led a rally at Egmore heading to the railway station in order to stage a rail blockade. However, cops thwarted the bid before detaining the protesters. VCK leader Thol Thirumavalavan, Manithaneya Makkal Katchi (MMK) president MH Jawahirullah, DMK MLAs PK Sekar Babu and Thayagam Kavi too courted arrest along with Kanimozhi. Former Chennai Mayor and MLA Ma Subramanian and Congress district secretary 'Karate' R Thiyagarajan led the road blockade at Saidapet, disrupting traffic. At T Nagar, DMK MLA J Anbazhagan led the opposition parties in staging a road roko. ENS



Two days without Internet

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Nagercoil

LIFE without the Internet is what the residents of Kanniyakumari district experienced for two days. They now know all too well how dependent we are on the Internet. The absence of Internet connectivity impacted normal lives in several ways including everyday bank transactions, submitting college applications and making travel plans.

While the elders did not have problems, many residents said that the impact of the no-connectivity status percolated into their daily activities. A 35-year-old man lamented that he could not do money transactions online or make card payments in the past two days. "Thanks to Digital India, we do most money transactions online. We could not use our cards at petrol bunks or at shops. The worst was being unable to book or cancel tickets. This was a real challenge for many since schools are reopening soon," he said.

Functioning of the passport office, collectorate and many other government and private office were also severely affected.

Many students went to Thiruvananthapuram or the border areas of the district to be able to submit their applications or pay their fees online and on time. They heaved a sigh of relief when connectivity was restored.

'Ensuring law and order is my priority'

Tirunelveli: Shilpa Prabhakar Satish, 2009 batch IAS officer, took charge as Tirunelveli's new district collector, on Friday.

Outgoing Collector Sandeep Nanduri has been transferred to Thoothukudi as District Collector, and Shilpa Prabhakar Satish, Executive Vice Chairperson of the Tamil Nadu Industrial Guidance and Export Promotion Bureau, has been appointed as the District Collector for Tirunelveli. Shilpa said that she was eager to work in the south district, which is considered the Oxford of the South. Promising to live up to expectations, Shilpa said that she would discuss the requirements of the district with the officials.

Road roko in Nagercoil, 237 DMK men booked

Nagercoil: More than 100 advocates staged a road roko in Kanniyakumari and a protest near the the district court here on Friday, condemning the government for shooting at the anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi. Similar protests were held at various parts of the district by different parties condemning the police firing. The R C Diocese of Kottar submitted a petition to the collectorate requesting the officials to take action against those involved in the shooting. Addressing media persons, a member of the diocese said that for the past several weeks, the people had been staging protests peacefully. In Kanniyakumari, many shops were open for the day's business.



STERLITE AGITATION

Vaiko held for staging protest in Tirunelveli

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Tirunelveli

MORE than 100 persons including MDMK leader Vaiko were arrested for holding a mass picket on the road in Tirunelveli on Friday, condemning police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi.

The MDMK cadre led by Vaiko and the members of the other parties including CPM came as a procession from Tirunelveli railway station road and staged the picket on the road in front of Tirunelveli junction bus stand.

Condemning the police firing, the protesters urged the officials to close down the Sterlite plant.

MDMK district secretaries KMA Nijam and Rajendran, CPM district secretary K G Baskaran and others participated. The police arrested around 116 protesters including Vaiko.

Speaking to reporters, Vaiko said that the police had opened fire on peaceful anti-Sterlite protesters who had marched towards the collectorate, and other persons. "The protesters had not set afire any vehicles on the premises of collectorate. But the police put the blame on them," he said.

The MDMK leader said that if the Sterlite plant is opened again, he would march with a huge number of people towards the plant.



4 MLAS AMONG CADRE HELD DURING BANDH CALL IN VELLORE

Most shops remain open in Fort City; protesters condemn police for shooting at the anti-Sterlite protesters

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE@ Vellore/
Cuddalore/Vilupuram/Puduchery

OVER 500 DMK and other party members, including four MLAs, were arrested on Friday for staging road rokos at various places in Vellore district condemning the shoot out against anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi.

DMK and other allied parties had called for a state-wide bandh on Friday to condemn the police action on the protesters, who were demanding the closure of Sterlite Copper plant in Thoothukudi on Tuesday.

However, normal life was not affected by the bandh as most shops remained open throughout the day across the district.

A road roko was staged near Makkan Signal at Anna Salai and was led by Anaicut MLA A P Nandakumar and Vellore MLA P Karthikeyan. Members of the DMK, Congress, Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi and CPM took part in the road roko and raised slogans against the Central and State governments.

Police personnel were deployed across the district to curb any untoward incident and they detained four MLAs and more than 500 cadre of different parties.

Most shops closed in Cuddalore

The bandh called by opposition parties affected normal life in Cuddalore district on Friday. Most of the shops and establishments except those dealing with essential services downed shutters. However, bus services were not affected as most of the buses, including private services, plied without any hindrance.

Meanwhile, more than 100 cadre from opposition parties were detained from Cuddalore town alone while they tried to block roads and take out a procession. The protesters raised slogans and demanded resignation of Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami.

Protests and demonstrations were held at more than 25 places in the district. According to the police, out of the 36,000 commercial establishments in the district, around 25,000 downed shutters on Friday.

725 held in Villupuram

A total of 725 cadre of Opposition parties were detained on Friday when they tried to stage road blocks at 19 places across district during the dawn-to-dusk bandh called in to protest the killing anti-Sterlite agitators in Thoothukudi.

The bandh affected normal life as most of the shops and commercial establishments remained



Road rokos

In Vellore, normal life was not affected by the bandh as most shops remained open throughout the day. A road roko, staged at Anna Salai, was led by Anaicut MLA A P Nandakumar and Vellore MLA P Karthikeyan. Members of the DMK, Congress, VCK and CPM took part in the road roko and raised slogans against the Central and State governments. Police personnel were deployed across the district to curb any untoward incident and they detained four MLAs and more than 500 cadre of different parties. Meanwhile in Chennai, leaders of opposition parties, including DMK working president MK Stalin, MDMK general secretary Vaiko, and VCK leader Thol Thirumavalavan

shut. However, TNSTC buses operated as usual.

The arrested Opposition cadre included former minister Ponnudi of DMK, MLAs Masilamani, Udayasuriyan, Vasantham Karthikeyan and Ginge Masthan.

Protests were held in front of the collectorate on Trichy Road and near the Old Bus Stand on East Pandy Road. The detained persons were held at a private marriage hall and released in the evening.

Bandh peaceful in Pondy

The 12-hour dawn to dusk bandh called by DMK and its allies was near total in Puducherry. The day



(1)Opposition parties staging a roadblock at Anna Salai in Vellore on Friday during the bandh to protest police action in Thoothukudi. (2) a deserted street in Cuddalore. (3) people gheraoing a bus in Puducherry | S DINESH, G PATTABIRAMAN

passed off peacefully even though as normal life was hit due to closure of majority of shops and establishments.

No incidents of violence were reported in the UT except a stone pelting incident at a petrol pump near Adithya Hotel on Kamaraj Salai.

Almost all shops and other

business establishments, fish and vegetable markets remained closed in the town.

All the private buses as well as Puducherry Road Transport Corporation buses were off the road while Tamil Nadu government buses operated services through Puducherry. A few Auto rickshaws and tempos plied as usual.

Both central and state government offices witnessed low attendance while cinema houses suspended their noon and matinee shows.

Meanwhile, elaborate security arrangements were made to maintain law and order during the day. On advise from Lt Governor Kiran Bedi, security was provided to central government offices.

Around 350 volunteers of different political parties were arrested when they put up road blockades at various points to prevent the movement of Tamil Nadu government buses and resorted to other forms of protests.

Around 110 DMK volunteers, led by party's south convener R Siva MLA, were arrested when they put up a road blockade in front of the New Bus Stand to prevent the movement of Tamil Nadu buses through Puducherry. D'Nagar Police prevented attack on the office of a Tamil daily by arresting around 30 persons belonging to Dravida Kazhagam and its leader Ilango.

They had come on a procession and burnt copies of the newspaper in protest against certain reports carried by the paper on Thoothukudi incident.

According to Lt Governor Kiran Bedi, 22 AMDMK cadre were arrested near MM salai, 35 SFI cadre arrested near the bus stand, 46 CPI(ML) cadre detained in Anna Salai and 19 MDMK party cadre, including 12 women, arrested near Indira Gandhi Square.

Anti-Sterlite protests continue in region; 50% shops closed

Demonstrations across Dharmapuri, Krishnagiri, Salem and Namakkal intensify on the third day of the protest; hundreds of opposition workers arrested

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Namakkal / Salem

THE protests against police officials for opening fire on civilians and demanding justice for people intensified with all opposition parties including DMK and Congress staging demonstrations and road rokos across the State. Hundreds of police officials were present in front of the Collector office and other important places in Salem for the last three days as a precautionary measure.

In Namakkal, hundreds of cadres from DMK, Congress and its alliance parties staged road roko near the bus stand. It led to traffic congestion in the heart of the town. Party members raised slogans against both State and Central governments and condemned DMK leader Stalin's arrest. In the morning hours, most shops were shut down after functioning for a few hours. As many as 141 cadres were apprehended in the whole District.

In Salem, DMK members led by MLA Rajendran protested in front of the new bus stand after conducting a rally from their office for the consecutive second



Following the bandh called by the opposition parties, shops remained closed at Town Hall in Coimbatore | S SENBAGAPANDIYAN

day. They raised slogans against Chief minister Edappadi K Palanisamy demanding his resignation and to take response for police firing in Thoothukudi. After a few minutes, police officials arrested 221 cadres including MLA.

Also, 45 members from Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) tried to enter into Salem collectorate and engaged in a road roko. They were later arrested. Their attempt to burn Chief Minister's effigy was prevented after police took the effigy

This created a huge uproar in the area and protesters went on a sudden road roko. Most shops in the areas of Lee Bazaar market, Shevapet other nearby places remained closed. JACTO GEO members staged protests in front of the post office.

175 DMK cadre held for staging demonstrations in D'puri, K'giri

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Dharmapuri/Krishnagiri

AS many as 75 people were arrested for protesting against the Sterlite Copper Smelter unit in Dharmapuri. In response to DMK's call for a State-wide bandh, about 50 per cent of shops were closed in both Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri districts on Friday.

As many as 75 people, including DMK MLA P N P Inbasekaran, from Pennagaram and Krishnapuram were arrested for attempting to stage a road-roko.

DMK District Secretary Subramani led the protest at the four-way junction in which over 100 partymen, including former MP Thamaraiselvan and VCK District Organiser Nandhan, took part. Speaking to media persons, Subramani said that the killing of innocent people in

“The police have to take equal responsibility as the Chief Minister for destroying the 13 families in Thoothukudi. The brutal attacks on the police did not stop even after several injured were admitted to the hospital”

MLA Senguttuvan

Thoothukudi was atrocious. “Every citizen has the right to protest peacefully. Announcing 144 emergency before the protest shows the district administration's inefficiency and how they were hellbent on suppressing the people,” he said, adding that the AIADMK government was solely responsible for the massacre.

Similarly in Krishnagiri district, over 100 DMK cadre led by MLA Senguttuvan, staged a pro-

test near the New bus stand. They raised slogans, condemning the AIADMK government and the atrocities of the police officials, which led to the death of 13 in Thoothukudi.

“The police have to take equal responsibility as the Chief Minister for destroying the 13 families in Thoothukudi. The brutal attacks on the police did not stop even after several injured were admitted to the hospital,” he pointed out.

115 partymen held in Erode

Over 115 cadres of DMK, Congress and VCK were arrested for staging a dharna at Veerappanchathram.

Heading the stir, the DMK District Secretary and former minister S Muthusamy claimed that no government in the country had killed its own people.



3,580 arrested for protesting against Thoothukudi firing

Chennai: As many as 3,580 persons were detained for a while for protesting against police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi killing 13, in Chennai on Friday. The protests were held as a part of the statewide bandh called by Opposition parties. Roads were blocked at 34 spots by the protesters. According to police, 3,580 persons including 400 women were arrested and detained in various marriage halls in the city.

Meanwhile, the Kancheepuram police arrested DMK working president M.K. Stalin for blocking the road at Madhuranthagam bus stand. He was on the way to Chennai when he suddenly stopped his car and conducted the protest.

Nearly 600 DMK cadres were arrested and released later by the district police. However, the police let the newly wedded couple Marimuthu and Priyadharsini, who took part in the protest with Stalin, go.

Meanwhile, in the city, the police arrested DMK MP Kanimozhi among party MLAs M. Subramanian, Vagai Chandrasekar, Sekar Babu, Karunanithi, Sudharsanam, J. Anbalagan, Selvam, M.K. Mohan and T.M. Anbarasan.

The police also arrested VCK leader Thirumavalavan for protesting near Egmore.

The police also arrested 50 DMK persons for blocking the road in Teynampet. The protest was conducted to condemn the arrest of M.K. Stalin in Madhuranthagam.

Thoothukudi limps back to normalcy

M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 25

The violence-hit 'Pearl city' of Thoothukudi began limping back to normalcy on Friday, three days after Tuesday's police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters.

The crisis management team led by top bureaucrats Gagandeep Singh Bedi and PWC Dawidar visited various places and took stock of the situation. Normal bus services have been restored in rural Thoothukudi. For the benefit of passengers stranded in the district, the administration permitted bus services from Madurai, Tiruchy, Tiruchendur and other places.

However, bus services in riot-rocked Thoothukudi town have remained paralysed for the last three days. The administration and police personnel are holding talks with representatives of bus operators to resume normal bus services in Thoothukudi. Anna Nagar, Bryan Nagar and Muthalamman Colony remained tense. And surveillance of these places was done with the help of a helicam.

Speaking to reporters after monitoring the situation, Gagandeep Singh Bedi said

● **The administration has made efforts to offer free food to the people at 10 Amma canteens across the town, Mr Nanduri said**

people requested the police to halt door-to-door security checks. Acceding to their request, this would be halted immediately, he said.

They have also requested the administration to withdraw additional deployment of commando forces in Thoothukudi. Mr Bedi said this would be withdrawn immediately. Considering the law and order situation, special forces would be withdrawn gradually.

Mr Dawidar also appealed the people to cooperate with the administration to restore normalcy. Meanwhile, district collector Sandeep Nanduri and SP Murali Rambha visited various places to reassure citizens of peace returning. Mr Nanduri said the for the benefit of people, vegetables from Madurai were brought to the town and sold at 'Farm Fresh' outlet operated by Tamil Nadu Cooperative Society. 'Aavin' parlour is selling milk round the clock.

Internet service not restored in T'kudi yet

Thoothukudi: Two days after the Internet service was suspended in Thoothukudi, Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli districts, the services restored in Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli districts on Friday. However, the Internet service has not been restored in Thoothukudi so far. The government ordered suspension of Internet services for five days in the districts from May 23 following violence in Thoothukudi district on May 22. In a communication, Dr Niranjan Mardi, Additional Chief Secretary on Friday has directed all the nodal officers of the Internet service providers in Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari districts to resume the service immediately. Following this, the internet service has been restored in Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli districts at 5.30 pm on Friday.

A large number of activists demanded the authorities to withdraw the suspension order as they faced serious hardships.

INNOCENT LIFE LOST IN THOOTHUKUDI FIRING

Grieving dad pleads with HC to hand over son's body

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 25

A grieving father, who lost his son (40) in the police firing during the anti-Sterlite agitation on May 22 in Thoothukudi, has approached the Madras high court to hand over the body of his son to him to perform his last rites.

A division bench comprising Justices T.Ravindran and P.Velmurugan permitted S.Balaiah to implead himself as a party respondent in the petition filed by three advocates.

Originally, the bench had on May 23 while passing

interim orders on the petition filed by advocate Jimraj Milton and two other advocates, directed authorities to preserve the bodies of the persons killed in police firing during anti-Sterlite agitation on May 22, until further orders.

In his petition, Balaiah submitted that his son Shanmugam has studied B.Com, MBA and now earning livelihood from audit work and share trading. On the fateful day of May 22, his son left to attend to some repair work of their house situated at Teachers Colony, Thoothukudi. The workers needed some mo-

ney to purchase materials for the repair works. Since he was not carrying enough cash, he left to draw money from an ATM. As fate would have it, he chose to go to collectorate where a TMB ATM was available. He was unaware of the agitation underway. When he was driving his two wheeler, he saw large number of people fleeing from the spot. He also fled away from the police and took shelter and called his mother over mobile phone and apprised her of the situation. She cautioned him to be careful and he assured that he would be back home soon.

They did not hear anything from him thereafter, Balaiah added.

He said at around 1.25 pm his niece Subbulakshmi contacted his son on hearing about the violence in Thoothukudi on TV channels, she was watching in Chennai. This call was attended by an unknown woman who asked her to come immediately to the general hospital, Thoothukudi. His niece immediately contacted his wife and asked her to go to the GH, Thoothukudi. He and his wife went to the GH and went ward after ward looking for their son. A nurse showed them a

blood strained bag belonging to his son. When they identified the bag, she directed them to the mortuary where they saw the lifeless body of their son, he added.

He said his family has been plunged into grief as his son has been shot and killed by police even though he was not part of group of protesters. They have been asking for the body to be handed over to them to perform the last rites. They have been informed that was not possible because of interim orders passed by this court. The police also promised them to help in

releasing the body and prepared a letter for him to sign. Without even reading the letter, he affixed his signature.

Later, he understood that the letter indicates that his son also participated in the agitation against Sterlite on May 22. To his knowledge, his son was not involved in any protest or agitation but was a victim of police firing only by reason of being at the wrong place at a wrong time. He requires his son's body to carry out the last rites.

Therefore, he prayed the court to modify its interim order, he added.



DMK MP Kanimozhi with other Opposition leaders stage a protest in Chennai on Friday. —DC

Oppn-called bandh against firing peaceful

DC CORRESPONDENTS
CHENNAI, MAY 25

The bandh called by the DMK-led opposition parties to 'condemn' the police firing at the anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi in which 13 lives were lost, and also to press for Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami to resign, passed off peacefully on Friday.

The bandh evoked strong response with most business establishments and shops closed in Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari districts adjoining Thoothukudi where the shops were mostly open to cater to the conflict-weary public. There was good response to the bandh in Tiruvarur, Tirupur and Coimbatore also. In the Congress-ruled Puducherry, the impact was total with even the government-run buses off roads and most establishments were shut, including cinema houses.

The response to the bandh was, however, only luke-warm in the rest of the state; perhaps due to the public fatigue

● The bandh evoked strong response with most business establishments and shops closed in Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari districts adjoining Thoothukudi where the shops were mostly open to cater to the conflict-weary public. There was good response to the bandh in Tiruvarur, Tirupur and Coimbatore also

over such mass protests—the last one was over Cauvery on April 5 called by the opposition parties.

There was another bandh by the traders association the day before that. The public had a tough time on April 12 too as the Opposition protested against Prime Minister Narendra Modi visiting Chennai for inaugurating DefExpo. And so on.

In this latest one, DMK and allies, including the Congress, IUML and MMK, besides other parties such as the VCK, CPI, CPI (M) and MDMK, took out protest rallies, with their leaders and cadres courting arrest.

They were released later in the evening. DMK working president M.K. Stalin led the protest at Madurantakam in Kancheepuram district while his sister and party Rajya Sabha Member Kanimozhi was in the forefront of the demo at Egmore in Chennai, where she was joined by VCK's Thol Thirumavalavan and M. H. Jawahirullah of the MMK.

Speaking to reporters after his release from a marriage hall at Acharapakkam in the evening, Stalin said the Opposition would continue agitating "until this government goes for good".

■ It was "planned murder" by cop with previous enmity

Bro cries for slain sibling, smells rat in cop's trigger

M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 25

A heart-rending episode amid the chaos of police firing here on Tuesday last has raised doubts whether one of the victims was finished off to settle personal scores, taking advantage of the violent situation in Thoothukudi.

This poignant story is about 28-year-old Maniraj, who ran an electrical shop opposite the old police quarters at Bryan Nagar here. On the fateful May 22, he received a call on his mobile from someone, recalled his anguished brother S. Velumani on Friday. Nobody in the family then even vaguely sensed that it was a call for the otherworld for Maniraj, as later he died in the firing.

But his family members are not willing to believe that a stray bullet fired by a policeman had accidentally killed him. Rather, they allege that it was a "planned murder" by a cop with whom the victim had previous enmity.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, S. Velumani, claimed Raja Dileepan, the constable who opened fire during the protest that day, was a regular customer to his brother Maniraj's shop. Dileepan had failed to repay a debt of Rs. 25,000 to Maniraj and they had a spat over the debt, even locked in a quarrel.

KIN OF DEAD COMPLAIN AGAINST REVENUE OFFICIALS

DC CORRESPONDENT
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 25

Even as steps are being taken to restore normalcy here, the Revenue officials are allegedly trying to browbeat family members of some police shoot victims into issuing statements that the death occurred due to lathi-charge and not due to the police firing.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Arumugam, uncle of victim B. Ranjith Kumar, 23, said the tasildar Paramasivam, along with other officials came to his house on Friday. They have demanded the family members to issue a statement to

Velumani recounted that "under these circumstances", Maniraj received the phone call from a person on May 22 at 11-45 am. Immediately he left home and hours later, his body was found in the government hospital mortuary. "We came to know he was shot dead," says Velumani emotionally breaking down.

Velumani suspects that Raja Dileepan "must have killed his brother" due to the previous enmity. Hence, free and fair enquiry must be conducted into the incident, he added.

the effect that Ranjith Kumar succumbed to injuries sustained during police lathi-charge.

Arumugam said, "we have vehemently opposed this and refused to issue the statement". "Ranjith Kumar was shot dead on May 22. He was shot on his head. The bullet pierced through his head. How can we deny and give a report stating that he died due to police lathi-charge. Instead we have demanded the offi-

cial to issue a declaration confirming that he had died due to the police shoot-out.

Arumugam demanded the government issue a G.O. closing down Sterlite and registering murder cases against the South Zone IG, Sailesh Kumar Yadav, Tirunelveli range DIG Kapilkumar Saratkar, former Thoothukudi SP, P Mahendran and former collector of Thoothukudi district, N Venkatesh.

STATE TRANSPORT BUS BURNT BY MISCREANTS

DC CORRESPONDENT
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 25

A state-owned transport bus bound for Tirunelveli was set ablaze by miscreants near here on Friday. The TNSTC bus proceeding to Tirunelveli from Udangudi was intercepted by three unidentified men at Keelakarungulam village and threatened the passengers to get down along with the driver and conductor. Later, the unidentified men doused the bus with the petrol they had brought, set it ablaze and escaped.

As the passengers hurried down, an aged couple--Valliammal (65) and her husband, Sudalai(70) sustained minor burn injuries and were rushed to Tirunelveli medical college hospital, sources said.

Based on the complaint of the bus driver, Ramesh the Srivaikundam police registered a case and are investigating. Police suspect that the bus burning near Srivaikundam might have been done by members of a group rioting in Thoothukudi for the last three days.

Pondy students stage bizarre protest

KAVYA M | DC
PUDUCHERRY, MAY 25

Students of Puducherry gathered for a unique protest near the new bus stand here on Friday morning against the police firing in Thoothukudi. Puducherry has been witnessing a series of protests by political parties and organisations for the second day on Friday. The bandh call given by Opposition parties evoked a near total effect in Puducherry where the Union Territory saw the anger of people against the Tamil Nadu government.

It was the Puducherry Students Federation which resorted to a novel agitation to condemn the police firing at Thoothukudi in which 13 people were killed. Two students dressed as Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswami and Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam were seen forced to walk through the streets from the Nellithope

The bandh call given by Opposition parties evoked a near total effect in Puducherry where the Union Territory saw the anger of people against the Tamil Nadu government

signal to the new bus stand amidst loud slogans by the protestors against the AIADMK government. The message was clear, "You are going to face the anger of people who will make you walk like this through the streets one day."

During the course of the procession the protesting students were seen feeding the 'leaders' salt and even pretending as if they were attacking the leaders with slippers. Displeasure with government was visible throughout the protest and protestors used abusive language against the AIADMK government in Tamil Nadu and its leaders. Police officers were mere spectators

till the procession reached the Puducherry new bus stand. Here, the two 'leaders' were forced to sit on the road and the students continued raising slogans. At this point, police interrupted and arrested around 50 volunteers.

At the same time, the bandh call given by opposition parties including the DMK and supported by the ruling Congress party in the Union Territory evoked a near total response and passed off peacefully with no untoward incidents.

Almost all shops and other business establishments remained closed. All private buses and Puducherry Road Transport Corporation owned buses were off the road. Tamil Nadu government owned buses operated services.

Political parties and organisations conducted protests at various points demanding the resignation of the AIADMK govern-

ment in Tamil Nadu. Around 300 volunteers of various political parties including R Siva MLA of the DMK were arrested when they organised protests and put up road blockades at various points to prevent the plying of Tamil Nadu government buses.

Puducherry Chief Minister V Narayanasamy visited the arrested protestors. Later, he told reporters that he had visited the agitators as a leader of the Congress party. "People have the right to protest and the police action in Tamil Nadu is a clear violation of human rights. A judicial enquiry should be conducted into this," he said.

Police made elaborate security arrangements to maintain law and order during the bandh. Security was provided to central government offices on the direction of Lt Governor Kiran Bedi.

LEGAL HELP DESK OPENS GH TO HELP VICTIMS

DC CORRESPONDENT
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 25

The Thoothukudi district legal services authority have quickly set up a legal help desk at Thoothukudi medical college hospital to help the riot victims admitted in the hospital.

Opening the legal help desk at the hospital premises, secretary, Thoothukudi district legal services authority and Sub-Judge, Samuel Benjamin said that the help desk has two panel advocates and two para-legal volunteers to help the riot victims and their relatives.

"Not only the victims, but also the accused can avail our help for obtaining bail," said sub-Judge Samuel Benjamin, who also said that advocates at the similar help desk at the district court in the city too are ready to help the riot victims.

Till evening, since the service was opened up this morning, the help desk was said to have received eight petitions.

"Most of the petitions we received today relates to obtaining bail," said the Sub-Judge, who too added that a petition seeking the release of an innocent youth, picked up by the police on suspicion, was properly represented by the panel advocates of the legal services authority to secure the release of the youth without the police registering any case.

Kamal warns MNM will approach human rights panels, gov, President

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 25

Actor turned politician Kamal Haasan on Friday warned that his Makkal Neethi Maiyam would legally approach the human rights commissions, court of justice and the offices of TN governor and President of India seeking justice for those killed in the police firing that took place during the recent anti Sterlite protests.

In a statement Mr Kamal said despite widespread public outcry no representative of the government

has issued any sort of statement as to answer the queries related to Thoothukudi violence. Who issued the firing order? What were the exact locations where the firing was ordered to take place and the types of weapons used were the queries awaiting answers, he said wondering why the government continues to maintain its silence. Such actions warrant immediate disciplinary action in the form of punitive

measures such as suspension and resignation of not just the officers who were responsible but also the

political powers that run this state, Kamal said.

The killing of civilians in the Sterlite protest is unprecedented and unheard of in both the state of Tamil Nadu and nation at large. There were events in the past across India which we have witnessed which involved an uprising and quelling of the same by the state governments.

But the number of casualties which is a result of police action, like we have seen in Tuticorin is perhaps the highest in recent past, the statement said.



Kiran Bedi, lieutenant governor of Puducherry calls on Banwarilal Purohit, governor of Tamil Nadu, at Raj Bhavan on Friday. — DC

CPI demands resignation of CM Palaniswami

Chennai, May 25: CPI on Friday demanded the resignation of Chief Minister K Palaniswami, owning moral responsibility for the police firing on protesters in Tuticorin that has claimed 13 lives and left scores injured. The Left party charged the state government with "state sponsored killing" of the protesters and "protecting Sterlite's interests". "The Chief Minister should own up moral responsibility for the deaths and step down. Sterlite should also go," CPI National Secretary D Raja said in a statement. Alleging that the company was known for looting natural resources and polluting the environment, he said since it could not set up the plant in other states, including Goa, "it established the plant in Tamil Nadu with state support." Police firing on May 22 and 23 following violence against Vedanta's copper plant in Tamil Nadu's port city of Tuticorin left 13 dead and over a 100 injured. CPI was among the DMK-led opposition parties which today held agitations as part of a State-wide shutdown call against the police firing and violence, besides seeking the resignation of Palaniswami. — PTI

DMK-led opposition called bandh evokes mixed response in western districts

Total shutdown in Coimbatore city

ANANTH MATHIVANAN | DC
COIMBATORE, MAY 25

The DMK-led opposition called bandh to protest the police firing at Thoothukudi against anti-Sterlite protesters was total here on Friday as traders downed shutters spontaneously, even as hundreds of DMK and other opposition party cadres were arrested for staging road-rokos in various places to condemn the police firing. Normal life in Coimbatore was affected after the entire district auto drivers' union, small and large scale traders union, commercial establishments extend their support to the statewide bandh called by the DMK.

Cadres of various other parties including Congress, Left parties and VCK joined the bandh.

All commercial establishments remained closed, including hotels, grocery shops, bakeries, cinema theatres and tea stalls among others.

Lawyers boycotted the courts and staged a protest condemning the police firing and demanded the per-

manent closure of Sterlite Copper plant in Thoothukudi.

Bus transportation was hit in the city, but around 1,200 town buses and route buses were plying as usual in outer areas. Gandhipuram, Singanilloor, Ukkadam, Mettupalayam bus stands near Sai Baba Colony wore a deserted look.

Few eateries at roadside and inside railway junction was functioning, while medical shops remained open in the suburbs.

Despite heavy police protection a group of more than 100 DMK cadres led by former minister Pongalur N.Palanisamy blocked buses at the Gandhipuram city town bus stand today.

The protestors demanded the resignation of Chief Minister Edappadi K.Palaniswami and immediate closure of the Sterlite copper plant in Thoothukudi. Police arrested 100 protestors including four women.

Meanwhile, ten transgenders also staged a protest at the Gandipuram central bus against Sterlite's operation in Thoothukudi.



Shops in Coimbatore downed shutters on Friday shutters extending support condemning the Police firing at Thoothukudi. —DC

KNITWEAR UNITS DOWN SHUTTERS IN TIRUPUR HUB

S. KATHTHASAMI | DC
TIRUPUR, MAY 25

Normal life was hit in the Tirupur knitwear hub, following closure of almost all knitwear manufacturing and allied units in response to the DMK's bandh call against the firing on anti-Sterlite agitators in Thoothukudi.

Knitwear industries and traders from

Tirupur region extended support to the bandh and most shops and industries were closed on Friday. Export garment manufacturers, domestic industries and job working units stopped production for a day. The Tirupur Exporters and Manufacturers Association (TEAMA) extended support to the bandh.

Mr. K S Babuji, general

secretary, South India Collar Shirts and Inner Wear Small Scale Manufacturers Association (SISMA), said, "In order to register our strong objection to the firing on the agitators, also to urge state government to close the Sterlite unit permanently and consider the demands of common people of the region, we took part in the bandh. About 3,000

small scale industries were closed for a day. About ₹100 crore worth production was hit in Tirupur knitwear hub, following closure of many export garment units and domestic units today." Many shops including retail outlets, bakeries, commercial establishments downed shutters. However, buses were operated normally in the district.

Bandh partial in Salem, Erode and Namakkal

ZAKEER HUSSAIN | DC
SALEM, MAY 25

Buses were operated normally in Erode, Namakkal and Salem districts, even as the bandh call by the DMK and opposition parties over police firing against agitators in Thoothukudi over Sterlite issue, evoked a lukewarm response in this western belt.

Private buses and Tamil Nadu Transport Corporation buses were operated as usual in Salem,

Namakkal and Erode districts. Autos under the aegis of Left trade unions, CITU and AITUC were not operated in Salem city, while other passenger autos were operated regularly.

Police personnel deployed at many spots in Salem city and city police commissioner Mr. Shankar and deputy commissioners monitored the situation across the city. However, shops at Sevvaipettai and Leigh Bazar down shutters, as traders extended support for the bandh.

Except few shops, all the shops and commercial establishments were found opened across Namakkal district. Normal life was not affected in the district.

In Erode district, majority of the shops were engaged in trading as usual and buses were operated regularly.

The shopkeepers in Gobichettipalayam, TN Palayam, Kaundhapadi and various parts of Erode district did not join the bandh.

In Salem town, police arrested

45 members of Democratic Youth Federation India (DYFI) and forcefully removed them when they attempted to go in a procession towards the Collectorate to protest the police firing in Thoothukudi. Some of them tried to burn the effigy of Chief Minister, Edappadi K Palaniswami but were prevented by officials at the spot.

The DYFI youth also demanded the Chief Minister's and DGP's resignations over the firing issue.

Lanka's north protest against Tuticorin firing

Colombo: A group of people in Sri Lanka's north district today protested against the police firing on the protesters in Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu that killed at least 13 people. On Tuesday, police opened fire on the protesters agitating against the expansion of the Sterlite Copper plant in Tuticorin, killing 13 protestors, including two women. Holding placards condemning the alleged police brutality, the group staged a demonstration at Jaffna this morning.

Meanwhile, a Left leaning trade union, United Federation of Labour has written a letter condemning the firing on protestors. In the letter, addressed to the Indian High Commissioner in Colombo, they urged that their protest be conveyed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister E K Palaniswami.

—PTI

DMK-led opposition Bandh to protest Thoothukudi firing against anti-Sterlite activists

Mixed response in central TN districts, over 500 arrested

Patial response to hartal in heart of Cauvery delta

R.VALAYAPATHY | DC
TIRUCHY, MAY 25:

The one-day bandh call given by the DMK and other opposition parties to condemn the Thoothukudi firing against anti-Sterlite protesters, evoked a mixed response in central districts of Tiruchy, Karur, Perambalur, Ariyalur, Pudukkottai, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam on Friday. More than 500 members and volunteers of DMK and allies were arrested across the central districts, but later released in the evening, police sources said.

Although the big shops were all closed, normal life of the public was not badly affected anywhere, as the buses plied as usual and train services maintained.

In Tiruchy, almost all shops partially remained opened, but in railway junction area, all shops remained closed.

Tension prevailed for a while at 'Onion mandi' at Tiruchy, where the owners and workers were ab-



CPI(M) volunteers stage a demonstration in front of the Central bus stand at Tiruchy on Friday.



Most of the shops remain closed at Tiruvarur on Friday. —DC

out to clash over a wordy quarrel on the closure of shops. On information, police rushed to the spot

and arrested 128 employees and restored normalcy. In Karur, while 80 per cent of the big businesses

downed their shutters, the smaller ones like tea shops remained open.

In Perambalur till around 11 am all the shops were open, but closed later when DMK men came in a procession.

Police took into the custody 21 volunteers of the VCK when they burnt the portrait of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K.Palaniswami near the new bus stand at Perambalur.

Police took into the custody of 50 DMK men when they resorted to road roko at Ariyalur, where 80 per cent of the shops were closed. A group of DMK men including party MLA S Raghupathy were arrested by the police when they resorted to 'road roko' at the bus stand at Pudukkottai.

The bandh call also evoked partial response both in Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts, where the DMK men were courted arrest when they resorted to road roko.

G.SRINIVASAN | DC
THANJAVUR, MAY 25

The district police arrested 560 members, including 23 women, of DMK and other opposition parties when they staged demonstrations at various places in Thanjavur district on Thursday as part of the bandh call given by the DMK and its allies to protest against the police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters at Thoothukudi.

The bandh call evoked partial response from traders with 40 per cent of the shops remaining closed in Thanjavur and other towns in the district.

At Thanjavur town Durai.Chandrasekaran, MLA and Thanjavur south district secretary of DMK led the agitation at old bus stand.

Mr. T.R. Baalu, former union minister, T.K.G. Neelamegam, town secretary, M. Ramachandran MLA, G.Neelamegam, dis-



DMK members stage a demonstration protesting against the police firing at Thoothukudi at Thanjavur on Thursday. —DC

trict secretary of CPI(M), M. Bharathi, district secretary of CPI, G. Udhayakumar, district secretary of MDMK and others participated in the agitation. The police arrested 110 of them.

The agitators condemned the police firing and said that the police and Tamil Nadu government should take the responsibility for

the loss of 13 innocent lives.

They demanded the resignation of the Chief Minister, Mr. Edappadi K.Palaniswami.

Similar agitations were held at 18 places including Kumbakonam, Thiruvaiyaru, Pattukottai, Peravurani, Orathanadu and Thiruvaidaimaruthur.

Plea to order CBI probe into killing of 13 people

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 25

The Madras high court has ordered notice to the CBI, on a public interest litigation, which sought a CBI probe into the killing of 13 persons in police firing during the anti-sterlite agitation on May 22 and 23 in Thoothukudi.

A division bench comprising Justices T.Ravindran and P.Velmurugan before whom the PIL filed by advocate A. P. Suryaprakasam came up for hearing also directed the state home secretary to consider the representation of the petitioner dated May 23 and 24, seeking to entrust the investigation to the CBI.

After hearing the petitioner and additional advocate general Narmada Sampath, the bench said the secretary, Home, government of Tamil Nadu was directed to consider the representation given by the petitioner and respond appropriately. At the request of the AAG, post the matter on May 30 for filing counter. Notice to the Director, CBI, the bench added.

According to Suryaprakasam, the police have cold bloodedly shot and murdered 13 civilians on May 22 in Thoothukudi in the name of controlling unarmed citizens agitating to save the earth from pollution. The villagers who fought for clean environment which was their fundamental right have been peacefully protest-



ing for 100 days against Sterlite industries, which has been spoiling the health of the people of Thoothukudi without any regards for human health and safety. It was shock to see the video clippings of the incident which undoubtedly prove that 2 police men atop a police van taking turns in directly shooting at the peaceful protesters with an intention to kill them with long range rifles and brutally murdered 13 unarmed civilians. There was apprehension in the mind of the people that truth will not come out if the state police was allowed to carry out investigation and an investigation by the CBI alone will bring out the truth. Moreover, even before the police officials start investigating this incident of killing innocent people by the police, a clean certificate of good conduct and exonerating the police from any wrong doing was given by the chief Minister, who was in charge of

● **'Even before the police start probing the incident, a clean certificate of good conduct and exonerating the police from any wrong doing was given by the CM, who was in charge of home department This has strengthened the belief that a probe by the state police will not be a fair and transparent one'**

home department. This has strengthened the belief of common man that the investigation by the state police will not be fair and transparent, he added.

Additional advocate general Narmada Sampath submitted that after the ban on internet services, normalcy has been restored.

There was also a peace committee meeting held Thursday. So far as the students applying for engineering admission was concerned, there was an extension of time for making online application for another three days.

Under Rule 2 (2) of the Telegraph Act, the government has issued the ban order on Internet Services. A review committee has been constituted where the chief secretary will preside to review the ban order. The representation of the petitioner will be considered by the authorities, she added.

Rameswaram deserted as traders, fishers take off

**DC CORRESPONDENT
RAMESWARAM, MAY 25**

The day-long 'bandh' called by opposition parties led by the DMK in Tamil Nadu on Friday to condemn the police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi on Tuesday last, evoked a near total response in the pilgrim island of Rameswaram.

Most shops and commercial establishments were closed for the day, while roads looked deserted and State transport buses carried very few passengers. The participation by the traders and fishermen in the 'bandh' was voluntary, sources said.



Members of the Tamil Nadu Meenavar Kootamaippu step into the water and stage a 'dharna' at the 'Agnitheertham' sea in Rameswaram on Friday. —DC

At the 'Agnitheertham' sea, members and volunteers including women of the 'Tamil Nadu Meenavar Kootamaippu' under the leadership of C.R. Senthilvel, stepped into the water and stage-

d a 'dharna' condemning the police firing in Thoothukudi.

Earlier, they paid homage to the memory of those killed in the firing by strewing flowers on the sea.

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Bus torched amid signs of normalcy in Tuticorin

TNN | May 26, 2018, 12.54 PM IST



TUTICORIN: Four days after normal life was thrown out of gear in Tuticorin following the anti-Sterlite violence in which 13 persons were killed in police firing, the city showed signs of limping back to normal on Friday. However, bad tidings came around 4 pm when miscreants set fire to a bus on a bridge near Srivaikundam. Three passengers suffered injuries in the incident and were taken to hospital. Bus services from the city were affected following the incident.

The bus which originated from Udankudi was on its way to Tirunelveli when it was stopped by three unidentified people on two bikes at Karungulam bridge. They attacked a lone policeman posted as security and chased him away. The miscreants then made all the 49 passengers alight from the bus, poured the petrol they brought with them on the back

seat and set it on fire before making off.

The injured persons were identified as Sudalaikannu, 70, from Meignanapuram and his wife Valliammal and Jabakumar, 25, from Karaikudi. They were taken to the Karungulam primary health centre from where they were referred to other hospitals. Police sources said that only the burn injury of Valliammal was of serious nature and that the bus was completely gutted in 30 minutes. Fire and rescue personnel who swung into action quelled the fire. On being alerted, a police team led by district superintendent of police Murali Rambha rushed to the spot and conducted an inquiry. Based on the complaint from the driver of the bus identified as Ramesh, a case was registered and a detailed inquiry was under way. Following the incident the district police beefed up security for buses as well as at all sensitive places.

Meanwhile, more vehicles were seen on the roads on Friday with one of the most important signals in the city, the VVD signal,

being switched on indicating a respite to the tensed situation which had been prevailing. However, only around five per cent of the shops opened their shutters. Autorickshaws were seen plying at many places, which was also a sign of normalcy returning as people were seen hailing them. TNSTC operated six bus services to Tirunelveli and five to Madurai — much lesser than the normal traffic to these two cities from Tuticorin. However, the euphoria was shortlived and the services halted following the burning incident. The most affected places like Therespuram and Anna Nagar continued to be tense and saw very little traffic.

Though big shops were closed, many eateries sprung up near the vicinity of the government hospital in Tuticorin. As the district administration had announced that the amma canteen near the hospital would be opened 24x7, many people were seen flocking there. They expressed relief at the food that was being provided free of cost for three days.

Meanwhile, the burnt and damaged vehicles were moved out of the collectorate premises using earth movers. People coming to the collectorate were frisked at three places including the main entrance and vehicle park, before entering the collector's office. District collector Sandeep Nanduri also went on his rounds around the city. CPI national secretary K Narayana and senior leader R Nallakannu visited the patients at the government hospital.

Tuticorin district collector Sandeep Nanduri has said that the public could call the helpline numbers 94864-54714, 0461-2340101 or 1077 if they had any problem in procuring essential commodities or if they needed any other assistance. As much as 13,000 litres of milk had been kept ready for distribution by Aavin and two mobile booths had become operational. If people had problem in getting milk they could call the number 94426-22232 to get it delivered at their doorstep, he said.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Victim's kin allege pressure to alter cause of death

TNN | May 26, 2018, 12.52 PM IST



TUTICORIN: While the officials along with the district administration were taking steps to restore normalcy in the district, certain measures being taken by them have not gone down well with the local people, who are still hostile towards the police and claim that they continue to harass them. Officials said that postmortem had been completed on six of the shooting victims so far. However, Arumugam, the paternal uncle of Ranjith Kumar, 22, the boxer who lost his life in the police firing, said that a police inspector along with a revenue official had come to their house and forced them to give the inquest for the postmortem.

They also wanted it to be given in writing that the young man had died in an accident in the violence and was not hit by bullets. "We saw bullet injuries on his body, how will we give something that would be totally unfair to him and in disrespect of his sacrifice," he said.

This family says that they will not receive the body till the government gives a gazette notification on the closure of Sterlite as both the chief minister and district collector continued to give oral assurances.

The point out that Sterlite authorities have claimed that they would go ahead with the operations in the plant soon. Seven families have not received the bodies yet. Meanwhile, another cause of tension among the residents was the use of drones used for surveillance by the police in Anna Nagar and Bryant Nagar. While they were clamouring for the police to be removed, now they felt intimidated by the drones monitoring them. Three local teams of drone operators and their assistants were roped in by the police for the purpose.

A senior police official said that it was only a trial measure and that the additional police would be removed once normalcy was restored.

Meanwhile, a 20-member team of advocates has opened a help desk of the District Legal Services Authority in two teams named A and B at the Government hospital to help the public on their immediate grievances like children missing, accessing their relatives in hospital and moving bail.

Advocates K Jagan and S R Selvam Christopher said that the desk would operate till Sunday from 9.30 am to 6 pm and the contact numbers of the advocates have been prominently displayed for them.

TAMIL NADU

Illegal detentions, torture continue, says NGO



Pon Vasanth B.A

MADURAI, MAY 27, 2018 00:00 IST

'Relatives of those in custody running from pillar to post to rescue them'

Illegal detention and torture of people, including many students who took part

in the anti-Sterlite protests, and even the general public, were continuing in Thoothukudi, alleged the Madurai-based non-governmental organisation People's Watch, which is involved in coordinating a people's inquest on the recent police firing during protests against Sterlite.

In an interview with The Hindu on Saturday, its executive director Henri Tiphagne said illegal detentions came to light with the rescue of more than 90 people, including many juveniles, from the Vallanadu Shooting Range following a search by the Judicial Magistrate of Vilathikulam on Wednesday night.

He pointed out that while around 30 were immediately let off by the police after the search, the remaining 60 were presented before the court for remand in judicial custody. "Many subsequently obtained bail with the help of advocates," he said.

He alleged that even on Friday night, three students were found to be illegally detained at Thoothukudi South police station.

Pat for courts

Pointing out that the subordinate courts in Thoothukudi district, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) and the advocates of Thoothukudi Bar Association were doing a commendable job in assisting the victims and ensuring due processes were followed, he said the administration must announce a toll free number for the DLSA.

"Remedy is being provided to those who approach DLSA. However, many people, whose family members have been detained by the police, are clueless about whom to approach," he said.

Arguing that it was a complete failure of the police and the district administration that resulted in the killing of 13 people and injuring hundreds on Tuesday, he said top police officials had to be held accountable.

"Instead, the government had deployed more than 20 IPS officers in Thoothukudi. The aim appears to be to create evidence to show that the police did everything as per procedure," he alleged

"There have been complaints from the public, including the families of the

deceased, that the police were asking them to sign statements without consent,” he added.

Stating that the single-member Commission of Inquiry appointed by the Tamil Nadu government could not bring out the truth, he said agencies such as the National Human Rights Commission and the State Human Rights Commission, which are empowered to investigate such human rights violations, must play a larger role.

Mr. Tiphagne said a Thoothukudi Firing People’s Inquest Coordination Committee, led by senior advocate A.W.D. Tilak, had been formed to organise a people’s inquest with the involvement of retired judges and police officials in the first week of June.

Subjects, citizens and maharajas



Rajeev Bhargava

MAY 27, 2018 00:00 IST

Thoothukudi tells us that we are still a deeply divided political unit, with varying access to basic democratic rights

The massacre at Thoothukudi (Tuticorin) made me think of the political status of those who came out to protest against Sterlite Industries. Formally, constitutionally, they were Indian citizens. But were they? Were they not aliens, the new mlecchas, a threat to the political order, to the state? Or perhaps they were neither citizens nor aliens but a subjugated people, subjects who were punished because they dared to be citizens.

The state's wrath

What did the locals do to incur the wrath of the state? They were merely exercising their minimal citizenship rights when they were mercilessly beaten by the police or shot by snipers. They made public their grievance about the vulnerable environmental conditions under which they are forced to live, about

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contamination of groundwater and pollution-induced diseases caused by the Sterlite plant. This discontent notwithstanding, the government, with the connivance of the Tamil Nadu pollution board, granted permission to the industry to expand. In deliberately violating their rights, do they not treat them as their subjects rather than as citizens?

The distinction between citizens and subjects is important in political thought and practice. To be a citizen is, first and foremost, to belong to a particular political community. Citizenship gives us a sense of who we are and creates a special bond with other members, a fellow-feeling that one might call civic friendship. This is why, along with family, linguistic or religio-philosophical groups, it is a source of commitment and obligation. But citizenship also brings us rights. To secure basic needs, citizens can make claims on each other and particularly on the state. Protection of life comes immediately to mind. That one will not be killed by arbitrary or intentional acts of others or by man-made disease or pollution is a fundamental human right. In large, complex, modern societies, so much has come to depend on the state that it alone must help realise it.

Other rights, without which survival is impossible, are dependent on the state too: the right to food, water, clean air, shelter, for example. Or rights that marginally improve the quality of our life: to safeguard our personal possessions, ease of mobility from place to place, public playgrounds, illuminated streets, protection of personal freedoms. All these exemplify rights of what might be called passive citizenship. Passive, because here we are essentially recipients. We receive these benefits if we follow laws and pay our taxes and are left alone to care for our families and do our jobs. But unlike other forms of states, democracy also gives rights which change the quality of citizenship. They enable active citizenship — rights to publicly complaint or protest, to deliberate on issues of public good, to scrutinise and criticise public policies, to hold our governments accountable, to form public associations, to vote, and to stand for public office.

Unlike citizens, subjects have none of these rights. Political participation is simply out of the question — subjects cannot vote, deliberate on public issues, complain, criticise, or stand for public office. They have no claims on the state — not even to the basic right to life. If they get food, shelter or any other

personal benefit, it is entirely on the goodwill of the state. Conquered people, the colonised, slaves, all those who live under laws made by others and designed to oppress them, are obvious examples. Subjects live in states meant for others. States, for them, are not political communities but a source of oppressive power. They are located within but do not belong to states. Nor do they identify with them. Subjects are bereft of civic friendship. All they have is a nameless, non-political relationship with other subjects.

A continuum

So, can we call the Thoothukudi protestors subjects of the Indian state? That may not be entirely accurate either. Perhaps, rather than view citizenship and subjecthood in terms of a binary, it is best to see them as part of a continuum. On the citizenship-subjecthood continuum, Thoothukudi protestors are barely citizens and mostly subjects. Better still, this continuum should be viewed more dynamically; large numbers of people in our democratic nation keep sliding from citizenship into subjecthood. Just as they begin to acquire minimal citizenship rights, they are thrown back to being subjects by an economic or political tornado in their lives. This is a normal condition of persons under conditions of domination — whenever oppression increases, people lose their freedoms, cease to be citizens and become subjects. Those generally without wealth or power are always on the edge of being so. In fact, this is true of most of us: citizenship or subjecthood is not a fixed location but a constantly shifting position. When out of fear of government reprisal, the educated middle class shuts up, it turns into subjects. If you want to experience subjecthood, just step in for a moment into any local municipal corporation office. You will instantly feel like a hapless subject of a powerful, opaque empire!

Of course, there are some among us who are neither subjects nor citizens, except perfunctorily. They command such enormous resources of power and wealth that they treat the entire apparatus of state power as their private instrument. Some heads of corporations, business magnates and politicians behave like, and indeed are, today's imperial rulers, reincarnating reckless maharajas of yesteryears who may exploit, oppress, dispossess others at their own sweet will.

Thoothukudi tells us that we are still a deeply divided political unit — most of us are largely subjects, some are citizens and a tiny group are maharajas who can even use public force as private army to kill, if it serves them or their friends.

Barring stray incident, normalcy returns as 90 pc Thoothukudi shops open for business

S GODSON WISELY DASS @Thoothukudi

THREE days after a mass stir ended in violence with police opening fire on protesters, Thoothukudi limped back to normalcy, barring a stray incident, on Saturday. Residents returned to regular activities and 90 per cent of shops opened for business. Police patrolling continued at key locations, including Anna Nagar where a youth was killed in firing on Wednesday.

Miscreants hurled a petrol bomb at the Kolathur police station at 1.30am Saturday, the man-made bomb explod-

ing at the verandah. On-duty police were unable to exit the station. Later, the fire was doused and police strength boosted, police sources said.

At Threspuram, sources said residents, anxious over alleged rounding up of youth at night, blocked roads in order to thwart entry of police.

District administration ensured regular supply of vegetables and other essentials. Supply of milk and water has become regular. Thoothukudi collector Sandeep Nanduri said over 160 metric tons of vegetables were brought to the market. Vegetables

were purchased by 53,000 people, generating revenue of ₹50 lakh, he said. Bankers had been asked to reload cash in ATM kiosks, he said. Nanduri also chaired a meeting, attended by Superintendent of Police Murali Rambha, with community leaders, representatives of traders, fishermen, religious leaders. The collector refused to comment on Vedanta director Anil Agarwal's statement that Sterlite Copper would resume operations with public support. The May 22 anti-Sterlite protest had demanded the unit in Thoothukudi be closed.

SUN, 27 MAY 2018

epaper.newindianexpress.com/c/29040196

THE NEW
INDIAN
EXPRESS



LEGAL BATTLE

A BRIEF HISTORY

AUGUST 1, 1994

Sterlite applies and obtains 'No Objection Certificate' from Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board

JANUARY 16, 1995

The Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India too grants clearance, subject to certain conditions

MAY 17, 1995

The Government of Tamil Nadu grants clearance subject to certain conditions and requests the TNPCCB to issue consent to the proposed plant of Vedanta

MAY 22, 1995

The TNPCCB grants its consent but it is challenged before the Madras High Court in 1996 by the National Trust for Clean Environment

JANUARY 1, 1997

Vedanta commences production. Also in 1997, MDMK general secretary Vaiko files a petition in the Madras High Court to stop forthwith the operation of the Sterlite plant. K Kanagaraj of CITU too approaches court the following year

2009

Sterlite obtains environmental clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Forests for a second copper smelter plant

SEPTEMBER 28, 2010

The High Court directs Sterlite to close down its plant at Thoothukudi

OCTOBER 1, 2010

Sterlite challenges the order, and the Supreme Court stays the High Court's judgement

MARCH 23, 2013

After a severe leak of sulphuric acid leads to one death and several others suffering suffocation, fresh demands rise for the closure of the plant

APRIL 2, 2013

Supreme Court sets aside the judgement for the closure of Sterlite, but orders the company to pay `100 crore as compensation. The money is to be spent on improvement of the environment in the vicinity of the plant by the district administration

FEBRUARY 2018

After learning that Sterlite is moving to expand its unit, several protests erupt

MARCH 28, 2018

Following mass protests, Sterlite closes plant for maintenance for 15 days

ON MARCH 31, 2018

Operation license granted to Sterlite unit by the TNPCCB expires

APRIL 25, 2018

MDMK general secretary Vaiko files a PIL seeking permanent closure of plant before the Madurai Bench of Madras High Court

MAY 22, 2018

On the 100th day of protests, police firing on agitators kills 13

MAY 23, 2018

HC stays expansion of Sterlite plant

SHIFTED THRICE

Vedanta had initially proposed to establish the plant in Gujarat but this was opposed vehemently and it was decided to shift the establishment of the plant to Goa. But because of opposition, the plant could not be established in Goa. Thereafter, Vedanta intended to set up the plant at Ratnagiri in Maharashtra in 1992 and invested `200 crore, but the Maharashtra government had to revoke the licence granted for setting up Sterlite due to protests by villagers



A saga of agitation against pollution

S GODSON WISELY DASS @ Thoothukudi

THE struggle against Sterlite Copper started in Thoothukudi some 23 years ago.

Sterlite Copper is a leading copper manufacturer in the country, located in the SIPCOT complex of Thoothukudi. The plant manufactures copper rod, copper wire and other copper products. The unit falls under red category (large scale) encloses a copper refinery, phosphoric acid plant and a sulphuric acid plant. The copper smelter unit was of 4 lakh tonne per annum capacity.

While the unit has faced opposition from the very beginning — it received a Consent to Establish in 1995 from TN government — public support for the anti-Sterlite movement grew after an alleged gas leak on March 23, 2013 in which at least 50 employees of a nearby company were affected. While former Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa ordered closure of the unit on March 29, 2013, the SC allowed operations to continue after penalising the company ₹100 crore on April 2, that year.

The Anti-Sterlite Movement leader Thamil Manthan told *Express* that the movement formed was in 1995 against the copper

smelter. They protested with principles of non-violence and democratic way of rallies. Others who have been part of the movement for two decades include retired professor Fathima Babu, Thermal Raja, a local businessman and Krishnamurthy, of unorganised workers' association.

In the early years, villages near the Sterlite plant backed rather than opposing it as they benefitted economically. Allegations of bribery also abound. "A councillor used to get ₹5 lakh and a Tata Sumo. The money could be more if you were a bigger politician," alleges one of the earlier organisers of anti-Sterlite movement.

Observers also say that the movement at that time fell apart as it was divided on caste lines in 1996. Four persons belonging to the Paravar community were shot dead in a police firing at port trust estate, which ended up in caste clash between the Nadars and Paravars.

In the past year, the movement has gained momentum as the company's proposal for a second unit with a production capacity 4 lakh TPA, received permission. Social activists, led by Fatima Babu, floated anti-Sterlite pro-

tests last August demanding that expansion works be stopped and that the unit be permanently closed. With the number of cancer-related deaths happening in and around the city, the villagers who once backed the plant wanted to scrap it. "What use is the money when our lives are at stake," says Jai Ganesh, whose father is battling cancer.

This year, villagers of Kummareddiarpuram, where the Sterlite unit expansion was planned, joined the movement. In February 2018, the Federation of Villages and Towns Against Sterlite was formed. The Federation claims to represent 18 villages and all 60 wards of Thoothukudi town. This time, the Federation took pains to ensure that all communities were represented including Thevars, Naickers, Vellalars and Dalits. Sources from the federation said that they refrained from appointing leadership to head the struggle, in a view that communal forces might hijack the agitation.

Father Loyola, who is studying peace among different communities in Thoothukudi, said the unity among the public of different castes was a reason for successful mobilisation of the protest in 2018.



Sun, 27 May 2018

epaper.newindianexpress.com/c/29040390



District administration sitting on ₹140 cr meant for environment remediation?

SV KRISHNA CHAITANYA @ Chennai

The Thoothukudi district administration has reportedly been sitting on a fund of ₹140 crore meant for environment remediation in Thoothukudi. This submission was made by Sterlite before the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board appellate authority recently in the presence of TNPCB and government officials, who did not dispute the assertion.

This fund is nothing but compensation paid by Sterlite in 2013 following the judgement of Supreme Court. In April 2013, the apex court had slapped a ₹100 crore penalty on Sterlite for causing pollution and the amount was

deposited with the district administration within three months of the order being passed.

As of today the ₹140 crore, with bank interest, has become ₹140 crore and, according to sources, is lying idle with the Thoothukudi district administration. A paltry ₹2.5 crore has reportedly been utilised and that too for laying roads and such. No efforts to plan of action has been drawn up to improve the environment conditions for the locals using the money, sources told the *Express*.

The Supreme Court had ordered the compensation as the plant had polluted the environment through emissions. Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) did not renew the



Shops are open on Saturday as Thoothukudi returns to normalcy | *EXPRESS*

plant's Consent To Operate for some period of time for reported violations and yet the plant continued to operate.

Senior counsel P S Raman, who is representing Sterlite before the TNPCB Appellate Authority, expressed disappointment over non-utilisation of funds while arguing that the pollution board has no proof of Sterlite's pollution after 2013.

In a report submitted before the appellate authority a few weeks ago, Joint Chief Environmental Engineer R Kannan raised alarm on increasing number of persons being diagnosed with cases of asthma, pharyngitis, sinusitis and other respiratory tract infections and ENT mor-

bidity. The report says, "The respiratory diseases were observed to be prevailing more in communities surrounding the Sterlite unit in Thoothukudi than the State's average." It also talks about rusty-red water flowing from taps which is suspected to have occurred due to increase in the iron content in groundwater.

Women in the villages surrounding the Sterlite unit have inexplicably high incidence of menstrual disorders, like menorrhagia and dysmenorrhoea. Fear of arsenic laced wastewater from Sterlite plant reportedly flooding the Silverpuram, Meelavittan and Kaluthaikattan tanks was not ruled out.

However, Sterlite, in its official

website, claims that the water samples from the piezometric bore-wells/dug wells are being checked by pollution board on monthly basis inside the plant premises and in nearby villages. "If Sterlite Copper were polluting the groundwater, we would expect to see evidence of marker pollutants like copper, zinc and arsenic. The samples do not reveal the presence of these marker pollutants," the company says. District collector Sandeep Nanduri is not available for comments.

District Environmental Engineer P S Livingston said he is not aware of the details as he took charge only on May 22. "I will get back after looking through the files," he said.



Sun, 27 May 2018

epaper.newindianexpress.com/c/29040620



Protesters seek referendum to decide Sterlite's future

Sporadic protests erupt in coastal district even as the epicentre in the town limps back to normalcy; DLSA members visit hospital to take stock of situation

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Thoothukudi

DAYS after police opened fire on anti-Sterlite protesters, call for a referendum on the future of the copper smelter grew stronger. Anti-Sterlite Movement leader Thamil Manthan told news persons that there was a wide chasm between the protesters and the State over the functioning of the plant and it could be bridged only when the government took steps to fulfil the wishes of the people.

DLSA officials visit the injured at hospital

The demands came in the wake of District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) chairman and principal judge Dr V Charuhastini interacting with the injured at the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital on Saturday. Charuhastini inquired with 52 patients and ascertained whether they needed specialised care at Government Rajaji Hospital in Madurai or private hospitals in Madurai.

Nedumaran wants NHRC probe into shooting

Meanwhile, slamming the decision to form a one-person committee to probe into the firing incident, Tamil Desiya Munani president Pazha Nedumaran demanded that the investigation be carried out by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). The Tamil leader demanded immediate withdrawal of police force from Thoothukudi.

Outfit plan to take out procession

The protests against the police atrocities continued unabated in the coastal town on Saturday with members of the Anarithu Parathar Meenavar Kootamipai deciding to take out a rally from Veerapandyapattinam to Tiruchendur next week.

Madurai on the boil

Protests erupted in Madurai as well with college students, youth, women, traders, labourers and farmers staging a human chain demonstration against the State.

Speaking to *Express*, coordinator of Elanthamillagam Rafiquraja demanded justice for the fallen.

Dhinakaran says plant won't function

Battling for immediate closure of Sterlite copper, Amma Makhal Munetra Kathagan leader TTV Dhinakaran said that collection

tor Sandeep Nanduri informed him that the State will not allow the copper plant to function.

GO on closure sought

Fishermen representatives demanded the State to release an order on the permanent closure of the plant. They met Collector Sandeep Nanduri at his chamber on Saturday in the presence of Superintendent of Police (SP) Murali Rama. As many as 15 members, including parish priests from Chinakovil, Lions Town and Thirupuram were present.



People at a fish market in Thoothukudi, where situation limped back to normalcy on Saturday | *EXPRESS*

White paper sought

Thoothukudi: Demanding that the Central government release a white paper on the Sterlite Copper Plant, Puthiya Tamilagam leader Dr K Krishnasamy said that all details of who approved the project and its progress should be made public. He said that these measures were needed to ensure transparency. He questioned the necessity of according space to the industry in the State when it had been denied permission by the Maharashtra government. "If the PCB had denied nod to the industry, how could the Central government approve its expansion plans, he questioned.

Tinsel town protests

Chennai: Nearly 200 mediapersons, writers and cine directors staged a demonstration here on Saturday to condemn the police firing at anti-Sterlite protesters at Thoothukudi. They gathered under the banner of Tamil Nadu Art Literature & Media Activist Movement at Chepak. They raised slogans against the police action. They also urged the State government to officially declare the permanent closure of Sterlite Copper Smelting plant at the earliest. Cases registered against the protesters, should be withdrawn and police officers should be suspended.

Ponnar blames Congress, DMK for firing fiasco

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Madurai

PUTTING the blame of the recent firing incident in Thoothukudi on the heads of the Congress and the DMK politicians, Union Minister Pon Radhakrishnan said that the two parties were to be held accountable for the loss of lives as they were instrumental in according nod to the company to function from Thoothukudi.

The Union Minister was here to participate in a Swachh Bharat Mission organised as a part of the Union government's four years in office. During the function, the Union Minister along with party cadre carried out clean up drives in Kochadai.

Stating that the BJP was in the forefront of agitations against the nuclear power plant at Koodankulam and the Sterlite

plant at Thoothukudi, he said that it was the Congress and its ally DMK that had brought the projects to the State despite stiff opposition from the residents and the various stakeholders. He said that had the parties given a patient ear to the people, the tragedy that took place on day last could have been averted.

Replying to a question on the law and order situation in Tamil Nadu, Pon Radhakrishnan said that the State government

should take immediate steps to maintain law and order. He told media persons that he would be very happy if the State government passed orders closing the Sterlite plant in the Thoothukudi district.

When questioned about the petrol and diesel price hike, Pon Radhakrishnan said that the reason for the price hike was BJP's attempt to redress the wrongs committed by dispensations preceding it.



Sun, 27 May 2018

epaper.newindianexpress.com/c/29040620



AGAINST STERLITE



Tamil writers and directors association protest against the government demanding ban on Sterlite plant in Thoothukudi at Chepauk on Saturday.

—DC



Swami Agnivesh

TN police firing incident: Agnivesh demands CBI probe

New Delhi: Social activist Swami Agnivesh on Saturday termed police firing in Tamil Nadu earlier this week as "state terrorism" and demanded a CBI probe of the incident. On Tuesday, police opened fire on the protestors agitating against the expansion of the Sterlite copper plant in Tamil Nadu's Thoothukudi, killing 13 protesters, including two women. He alleged that the incidents of high handedness against people protesting their rights have increased under the Narendra Modi government. "The state-sponsored terrorism unleashed on the suffering, much-harassed people of Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu, is a black chapter in the history of the state," he said. "Ever since Modi has come to power, we have seen an unprecedented iron-handedness in dealing with people protesting for their basic rights," Agnivesh charged.

He said that an enquiry by the CBI should be held to cover all aspects of the firing incident at Thoothukudi. Agnivesh also appealed to the President for his intervention in the matter. — PTI

UN official expresses concern over Thoothukudi deaths

Kochi, May 26: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) chief Erik Solheim on Saturday expressed concern over the death of 13 people in police firing during violent protests against the Vedanta group's copper smelter plant in Tamil Nadu's Thoothukudi district. The UNEP executive director general said he was "worried" and hoped that protests would remain non-violent. "We are concerned over this and paying our condolence to those who have lost their lives," he said. "Let me say my prayers and extend my condolences to the families of those who died. This shall not happen," Solheim said, during a media interaction here. Protests should be without violence and the police should not use force, he said. "We are very worried and hope that solutions can be found," the UN official said, when asked about his views on the killing of people protesting against the copper plant on May 22. Solheim, who was here to visit the Cochin international airport, the world's first fully solar-powered airport, called for a "dialogue with the people" before implementing infrastructure projects. He also emphasised the need for environmental protection when going ahead with such projects. Violence erupted in Thoothukudi on May 22 and 23 as locals took to streets, demanding closure of the copper factory over pollution concerns. In a filing with the Bombay Stock Exchange, Vedanta said the Tamil Nadu pollution control board had on May 23 ordered disconnection of electricity supply and closure of the copper plant. Opposition parties DMK, PMK, Congress and the MNM in Tamil Nadu had slammed the violence and police action, while top actor Rajinikanth, who is slated to launch his political party, held the government responsible for the deaths.

Near normalcy in T'Kudi now: Collector

Thoothukudi, May 26:

Four days after it was rocked by violence during protests against a copper plant, Thoothukudi on Saturday returned to near normalcy with operation of state-run buses and availability of all essential commodities, though authorities were maintaining a tight vigil to prevent any fresh flare up.

Police have deployed drones in select locations to monitor the situation as part of efforts to maintain law and order in the district where 13 people were killed in police firing during anti-Sterlite plant protests on Tuesday. Internet services suspended in Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli districts on May 23 have been restored. District Collector Sandeep Nanduri told reporters that government buses are being operated "100 per cent" and all essential commodities, including milk and vegetables, were available.

"Private mini buses will be operational by evening," he said, adding talks for restoration of services with bank authorities and petrol pump dealers have concluded. Bank branches, ATMs and retail fuel outlets would be fully operational very soon, he said. "If you see, the city has now come to 90 per cent normalcy, people are going about their daily activities and we are confident that it will be 100 per cent normal within a day or two," he said. Along with district authorities, including Superintendent of Police Murali Rambha, he was interacting with people, Nanduri said and expressed confidence that "very soon a friendly ambience would be restored". "We are for the people," he stressed. Declining to answer a question on the violence, he said retired Justice Aruna Jagadeesan Inquiry Commission constituted by the state government is expected to start its proceedings soon in this regard.

Superintendent of Police Murali Rambha denied any illegal detention of protestors and added that all those arrested in connection with cases were produced before the court. So far, 145 persons had been arrested and remanded in judicial custody in connection with the riots and a sec-

PRIEST LEO COMES 'ALIVE' AFTER SOCIAL MEDIA OVERKILL

**M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 26**

The overkill by the social media virtually pronounced him dead as one of the 'fatal victims' of the May 22 police firing here against anti-Sterlite protesters.

Happily to one and all, those rumours were belied as Rev Fr Leo Jayaseelan, the 70-year-old Catholic clergy, is recuperating at the American Mission hospital in Thoothukudi after a bullet was removed in a surgical procedure from his right hip.

The parish priest of Thailapuram village near Nazareth in the district is doing fine, clarified the Catholic parastate here, quelling rumours that he was possibly dead in the police firing, though he luckily suffered only an injury.

The clarification from the Catholic Church came as a huge relief as the earlier misinformation about his health condition had triggered tension not only here but also in his native village Kootapuli, a coastal hamlet in Tirunelveli district, and at the Thailapuram parish in Thoothukudi district where he works.

Even MDMK leader Vaiko was initially misled about the information circulating in social media about the highly respected Catholic priest, but all doubts "about his existence" were quickly

tion of them had got bail, he said.

"When the situation keeps improving, the strength of police personnel posted in the city will be gradually reduced," he said. On restoration of internet services in Thoothukudi, the Collector said the "situation is being monitored" and added that higher government officials would take a decision in this regard. Internet services were yesterday restored in neighbouring Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli districts.

Tamil Nadu Congress Committee President Su Thirunavukkarasar



Rev Fr Leo Jayaseelan injured in police firing undergoing treatment at hospital.

laid to rest by the Church clarification here today.

When this reporter met the priest at the hospital, he explained what happened at the anti-Sterlite rally near the district collector's office that day. "I went along with the people only to submit a petition to the district collector demanding the permanent closure of the copper plant," said the priest. He, however, was in a civil dress, as the parastate rule does not allow individual priests participate in processions like the one taken out on May 22 in clergy attire.

I expected police lathi-charge on the fateful day (May 22) as the people became unruly, but did not even imagine that the police would resort to the extreme step of resorting to firing against the people," regretted Fr Leo Jayaseelan. The anger of the people here is so intense that they would never accept Sterlite Copper to resume operations, he emphasized.

demanding a compensation of Rs one crore to the kin of victims of police firing. "Cases filed against the protestors should be withdrawn. Those arrested should be released and the Sterlite copper plant must be permanently closed," he said.

Violence erupted when a massive gathering of people took out a rally against the Sterlite copper plant here on May 22. In the police firing that day and on May 23, 13 people were killed. Protest demonstrations, meanwhile, were held today in Chennai and Nagapattinam against the police firing. — PTI

CPM men arrested near Tiruchy

Tiruchy: Police arrested more than 40 volunteers of CPI(M) when they attempted to stage a demonstration at Thuraiyur near here on Saturday, demanding the permanent closure of the private explosives unit at Murungapatti near Thuraiyur in Tiruchy district, where an explosion last year claimed 19 lives. The CPI(M) senior leader and Rajya Sabha member T.K. Rangarajan strongly condemned the police attack on his party-men who were agitating there in a peaceful manner. In a release at Tiruchy on Saturday, Mr. Rangarajan demanded that police should release all the arrested and the higher-ups of the department should take suitable action against the erring cops. Comrade Rangarajan also demanded that the explosives unit should be shut permanently and the people of Murungapatti and its surrounding villages allowed to live safely and in peace.

Collector works hard to bring peace to Thoothukudi

M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 26

Thoothukudi district administration is just half way through to peace, as the herculean task ahead for the new collector, Sandeep Nanduri is to perform autopsy of the bodies of those died in police action and properly dispose all the 13 bodies.

“Unless the victims’ bodies are properly disposed from the mortuary peace cannot be restored fully,” said a police officer, who too added that the district collector has been striving all his nerves along with the two senior IAS officers, Wilfred Dawidar and Gagandeep Singh Bedi, specially deployed to bring back normalcy in Thoothukudi, to convince the relatives of the victims to get their con-



sent for doing autopsy.

To sort out the issue in a smooth way, the collector has been meeting influential persons and parish priests, who could pacify the people.

The leaders, however, hesitate to give any assurance to the administration in this regard as they fear that any such promise may go against the will of the people.

After participating in a meeting with the district collector and SP on Satu-

rday, Rev Fr Norbert Thomas of Chinnakoil in Thoothukudi said that they (other priests participated along with him in the meeting) had categorically stated in the meeting that unless a proper government order is issued for the permanent closure of the copper major in Thoothukudi, “we would not accept for the post-mortem.”

The collector in response adverted to the Chief Minister’s public statement in this regard and the TNPCB having denied consent to operate to the factory. Mr. Nanduri said he explained about this in detail to the clergymen today. So far, autopsy for six bodies of persons killed in the police firing have been performed with due consent from their blood relatives, collector added.

Toll is higher in Thoothukudi firing: John Pandian

Tiruchy: The Tamilaga Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam president, Mr. John Pandian said that the casualty in the Thoothukudi police firing was definitely more. He alleged that in order to hide the casualty numbers, police imposed Section 144 ban order and filed cases against the leaders concerned. He told newsmen at Tiruchy on Saturday, that they will never allow the resumption of Sterlite unit there and blamed both the Central and State Governments for the police firing in the port-town. He disputed the Chief Minister Edappadi K. Planiswami's claim that the law and order situation in Tamil Nadu is good and said his stance was only to safeguard his post. John Pandian wanted both the Central and State governments to take necessary steps for the permanent closure of the Sterlite unit. Meanwhile, members of the Nagapattinam and Karaikal Fishermen Associations stayed back on shore and staged a demonstration in front of the head post office at Nagapattinam on Saturday, to condemn the Thoothukudi police firing.

‘Bus services to resume in stages in Thoothukudi’

Karur: Efforts would be made to resume bus services of the Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation (TNSTC) in phases in and around riot-torn Thoothukudi area, according to State transport Minister M.R. Vijayabaskar.

Addressing a press conference here after inspecting a few school buses along with the Karur collector T. Anbazhagan and other officials on Saturday, Mr. Vijayabaskar said if necessary, the TNSTC buses will be operated with adequate police ‘bandobust’. Moreover, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami has ordered resumption of bus services wherever necessary, he added.

Asked to comment on the Thoothukudi police firing incident, the minister evaded a direct reply, but added that both the CM and Deputy CM will come out with the suitable reply. *DC*

TAMIL NADU

Officials console police firing victims' relatives



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 28, 2018 00:00 IST

Neighbours express their displeasure over the incident

Sharing their grief with the family members, who lost their dear ones in the police firing on May 22 here, Collector Sandeep Nanduri, accompanied by Monitoring Officer Gagandeep Singh Bedi and others visited the residence of P. Selvasekaran in Sawyerpuram on Sunday.

According to officials, the State government, on orders of the High Court, had enhanced the relief sum from Rs. 10 lakh to Rs. 20 lakh to those family members who lost their legal heirs.

The officials said that for people who suffered multiple or grievous injuries, the compensation would be Rs. 5 lakh and for minor injuries, the government would give Rs. 1.50 lakh.

In a bid to convey the message from Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami that the firing incident was unfortunate, the top officials also expressed their

condolences.

Government job

The government has proposed to give a job to a person from each family on humanitarian grounds.

Earlier, the officers spoke to the family members of Selvasekaran, who had left behind his mother Masanam and two sisters Shanta (51) and Seetha (45).

Even as the family members narrated the nightmarish experience they had encountered on the day, when the police had opened fire against the anti-Sterlite rally, they broke down and wept uncontrollably.

While the officers consoled the members, the neighbours expressed their displeasure over the firing.

Many were heard demanding the officers as to what prevented the government from ordering the closure of the plant when there was so much hue and cry.

TAMIL NADU

Demonstrations staged against Thoothukudi firing

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

SALEM, MAY 28, 2018 00:00 IST

A group of youth and college students under the banner Ilaignar Koottamaippu on Sunday attempted to stage a demonstration in front of the Collectorate to condemn the recent police action against the Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi.

They marched towards the Collectorate, when the police intercepted them. They were told that staging agitation without police permission was not allowed. Following this, they raised slogans condemning the police action and later dispersed.

The cadre of the Tamizhaga Vaazhvirimai Katchi staged a demonstration at the Kondalampatti bypass road junction on Sunday condemning the police action against the Sterlite protesters and also condemning the arrest of the party founder T. Velmurugan.

Slogans raised

They raised slogans demanding immediate release of the leader. Durai Senthilkumar, State propaganda secretary of the party, led the agitation.

STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 28, 2018 00:00 IST

Tamil Nadu Director General of Police (DGP) T.K. Rajendran on Sunday visited Thoothukudi and said that the police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters on Tuesday last was “unfortunate”.

The top police officer, who arrived here on Sunday noon, went to the Government Hospital and inquired with the patients and the doctors about the progress of those undergoing treatment.

He also held a meeting with Superintendents of Police from southern districts, in which DIGs and IGP (south zone) Shailesh Kumar Yadav participated.

Though the outcome of the meeting was not known, sources said the DGP reviewed the situation and laid stress on the need to maintain law and order.

CPI leader flays govt. for Thoothukudi firing

STAFF REPORTER

TIRUPUR, MAY 28, 2018 00:00 IST

Terming the police firing at Thoothukudi as a State-orchestrated incident to put an end to people's protests against Sterlite Copper, the Communist Party of India State secretary R. Mutharasan alleged that the State and Central governments were supportive of the company.

Mr. Mutharasan claimed that the interactions he held with the persons injured, both in the firing and in the lathicharge, and admitted at Thoothukudi government hospital, indicated that the burning of vehicles on the Collectorate premises was pre-planned.

“The injured told me that their protest march was peaceful and the vehicles started catching fire even as they were standing outside after being stopped by the police there,” he told reporters here on Sunday.

According to him, an inquiry should be conducted by a sitting High Court judge and not by a retired judge.

Mr. Mutharasan asked as to why Prime Minister Narendra Modi was not saying anything on the Thoothukudi police firing. “His silence is stunning especially when he is the one who has been commenting on every other matter,” he said.

The CPI had called for giving a solatium of at least Rs. 1 crore to the families of people died in the firing.

TAMIL NADU

TN government orders closure of Sterlite copper smelter



J. Praveen Paul Joseph

TUTICORIN (TN), MARCH 30, 2013 12:20 IST

Power supply cut; Vaiko says shutdown victory for local people

Mired in controversy in recent days, Sterlite Industries Limited's copper smelter in Tuticorin was shut down on Saturday.

Operations in the plant came to a standstill in the wake of an order from the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board. Tuticorin Collector Ashish Kumar instructed officials to inspect the Vedanata group company to make sure that the production lines remained shut.

The closure order has come after a gas leak was reported in the early hours on March 23.

Following emission of sulphur dioxide from Sterlite, people in the neighbourhood experienced unease and complained of suffocation, sneezing and burning sensation in the eye.

D. Dhanavel, General Manager, Projects, Sterlite Copper, said the closure order was received on Friday night.

An order was served by Revenue Divisional Officer of Tuticorin, K. Latha, to the company on March 24, seeking explanation for the incident within five days.

A team comprising Revenue Divisional Officer of Tuticorin, officials from the Pollution Control Board, Revenue and Tangedco has been carrying out

inspections at the sulphuric acid plant, the phosphoric acid plant and other plants since 8 a.m., Ms. Latha said.

The Collector, when contacted, told The Hindu that power lines to the company were disconnected.

Tuticorin Tangedco Superintending Engineer, R. Amirtha Rathnakumar, said power was cut at 12.21 a.m. on Saturday.

Activists celebrate

Activists protesting against the functioning of the copper smelter celebrated the shutdown, but the company insisted that it had been in operation for 17 years with all requisite clearances and approvals.

It said it would explain the factual position to the TNPCB and cooperate fully with the authorities so that it could restart operations soon.

Calling it a victory for the local population, Vaiko, general secretary, MDMK, in a statement thanked Chief Minister Jayalalithaa for her decision to close down the smelter. He termed Sterlite as a 'noxious industry' causing harm to the lives of people. Pollution in all forms from Sterlite and its baneful effects impacted the livelihoods of farmers, fishermen and traders as farm lands turned unproductive and groundwater and seawater became unusable.



Most of the ATM centres in Thoothukudi town ran dry, leading to liquid money crunch | V KARTHIKALAGU

THOOTHUKUDI INCIDENT UNFORTUNATE: TOP COP

DGP TK Rajendran visits injured at hospital; says will act based on committee's submissions

GODSON WISELY DAAS
@Thoothukudi

FIVE days after 13 people fell to police bullets, Director General of Police (DGP) T K Rajendran on Sunday termed the May 22 incident 'unfortunate and painful'.

Rajendran visited the injured at the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital on Sunday evening. Media persons were not allowed to cover the interaction.

The DGP told media persons that once the one-person committee probing into the incident submitted its report, action would be taken. "Generally, the police and the revenue officials work together to ensure law and order in sensitive places. However, this incident has prompted the State government to launch a probe by a judicial commission," he said, adding that Collector and Superintendent of Police were making efforts to restore peace. The DGP appealed to the public to cooperate, and added that the police presence would be gradually scaled down.

Meanwhile, the Co-ordination Committee for People's Tribunal on Thoothukudi Police Firing

launched a probe parallel to the one being conducted by the NHRC and the SHRC on Sunday. The coordination committee said that its probe panel would have former judges, police officials, educationist, advocates and doctors as members to conduct a two-phase inquiry.

According to the coordination committee, a team of advocates attached to the Thoothukudi Bar As-

The Collector and the SP are making efforts to restore peace. I appeal to the public to cooperate with the administration, and soon police presence would be scaled down

TK Rajendran

sociation would carry out a field visit and compile a ground report on May 28 and May 29. On May 30 and May 31, meetings would be convened to register the complaints of the residents.

"The public tribunal aims to fix the responsibility of human rights violation of the officials of the police and revenue departments," the committee members told reporters.

Reaching out to the kin

Bar association members reaching out to the families of the fallen and the injured in the May 22 incident has come as a relief to the relatives, who claim to be harassed by the police. While dust of the incident is yet to settle down, many families are clueless about whereabouts of their loved ones, missing since Tuesday last.

According to Anti-Sterlite Movement leader Thamil Manthan, police are manipulating records to downplay number of those injured. Manthan alleged that the police were threatening the relatives to accept the body.

Stating that a list of the missing protesters would be released soon, Manthan said that police had detained many youth illegally. These detenus were in addition to the 130 people released, he claimed. Relatives alleged that police were arm twisting them into accepting the bodies. A relative of one of the fallen protesters claimed that a statement they were pressured to sign had no mention of death being caused by bullets. Of the 13 bereaved families, eight have denied signing official statement, said sources.

CM announces hike in solatium for victims



Chennai: Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami on Sunday announced a hike in solatium to the victims of Thoothukudi police firing, following

representations from several quarters and instruction from the Madurai Bench of the HC. The compensation has been increased to ` 20 lakh from ` 10 lakh and for the severely injured, it has been hiked to ` 5 lakh from ` 3 lakh, Palaniswami said in a statement.

Internet to be restored in 24 hrs starting Monday



Thoothukudi: Addressing media persons after calling on the injured at the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital here on Sunday, DGP T K Rajendran

said that Internet services would be restored to the coastal district in a phased manner starting 12 am Monday. Meanwhile, prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPC lapsed at 8 pm on Sunday, but was not extended.



MAY 22 INCIDENT UNFORTUNATE, SAYS TOP COP

DGP TK Rajendran visits the injured at Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital; says will act based on judicial committee's submissions

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would carry out a field visit and compile a ground report on May 28 and May 29. On May 30 and May 31, meetings would be convened to register the complaints of the residents. "The public tribunal aims to fix the responsibility of human rights violation of the officials of the police and revenue departments," the committee members told reporters.

Reaching out to the kin of the deceased and injured

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The Collector and the SP are making efforts to restore peace. I appeal to the public to cooperate with the administration, and soon police presence would be scaled down

TK Rajendran



(Clockwise from top) Most of the ATM centres in the coastal town ran dry, leading to a liquid money crunch; protesters arguing with policemen; and police presence beefed up at Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital in view of the visit of Minister Kadambur Raju | V KARTHIKALAGU

Jaya's clip made public to divert public attention: TTV



Madurai: Lashing out at the one-man commission probing into the death of J Jayalalithaa, AMMK founder and RK Nagar MLA TTV Dhinakaran said that the clip of the former chief minister was released to divert the attention of the people from the May 22 incident in Thoothukudi. Speaking to the media

at the Madurai Airport, Dhinakaran said that there was surprising about the clip as he himself had seen Jayalalithaa write down her diet chart numerous times. "Jayalalithaa had the habit of preparing her own diet chart," he said. When queried about the celebration undertaken by the Union government to mark its fourth anniversary, the RK Nagar MLA said that the NDA government had brought nothing but pain for the people of Tamil Nadu. Earlier, TTV Dhinakaran had questioned the dichotomy between the versions of the State government and the Sterlite management, saying that while the government was saying it would shut down the plant, the firm exuded confidence in continuing its operation.

Modi's silence on emotive issue unfortunate, says Stalin



Madurai: Coming down heavily on the State government in general and the Union government in particular, DMK working president said that the Centre's silence on an emotive issue was unfortunate. The leader of the Opposition targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not coming forward

to condole the death of the 13 civilians shot dead by police in Thoothukudi. Stalin urged the people of the State to analyse the reason behind police opening fire on peaceful protesters, remember the people behind the incident and teach them a lasting lesson for throwing Tamil Nadu into turmoil. Lashing out at the State government, Stalin said that an incapable and incompetent dispensation was at helm. He said that the current regime was unmindful of the sufferings of the people and seldom bothered about the welfare of the people. Stalin was here to participate in a marriage function, during which he extolled the greatness of Dravidian parties, Thanthai Periyar, Annadurai and Karunanidhi for pioneering marriage reforms.

Internet services to be restored in 24 hrs starting midnight



Thoothukudi: Addressing media persons after calling on the injured at the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital here on Sunday, Director General of Police (DGP) T K Rajendran said that internet services would be restored to the coastal district in a phased manner starting 12 am

Monday. Meanwhile, prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPC lapsed at 8 pm on Sunday, but was not extended. The DGP held a meeting with the District Collector Sandeep Naduri, Superintendent of Police Murali Ramba and the Monitoring Officers Gagandeep Singh Bedi and P W C Davidar on Sunday evening. Rajendran exuded confidence that internet services would be up and running in 24 hours, and said, "The law and order situation in the district is under control. Police presence would be scaled down in the coming days. However, local police presence would be strong in view of the Deputy Chief Minister's visit on Monday." O Panneerselvam is slated to visit the injured at the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital on Monday.



Bring back normalcy in Thoothukudi by closing Sterlite: Vasan

The Tamil Nadu Congress leader urged all parties in State to seek a resolution on the permanent closure of the unit in the upcoming Assembly session

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Rameswaram

SPEAKING to media persons here, on Sunday, Tamil Nadu Congress leader O K Vasan urged that all the parties in the State should join hands and seek a resolution on the closure of the Sterlite Copper unit functioning in Thoothukudi, in the upcoming assembly session.

Talking about the planned visit of Deputy Chief Minister O Pan-

neerselvam to Thoothukudi to console the family members of those who lost their lives in the police firing, Vasan said that the Tamil Nadu government was responsible for the killing of 13 people during the anti-Sterlite protests.

"The victims who protested for justice have been gunned down like birds. This should not have happened in a democratic country. The State government should give ₹50 lakh compensation to the

families of the deceased. Besides, it should give a government job to one member from each of the families."

Alleging that the functioning of Sterlite would affect the future generations, Vasan urged the State government to bring back normalcy in Thoothukudi District by closing Sterlite permanently.

"Since the series of incidents that happened in Thoothukudi was only due to the apathy of the

On petrol price hike
Vasan condemned the Centre for the hike in the prices of petrol and diesel and demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi bring down the prices

State government. All the people arrested during the protests should be freed and the cases reg-

istered against them should be withdrawn. The police must not treat the youth and students like criminals," he stated.

Vasan expressed the hope that the court would favour the protesters, considering the environmental issues being faced by them, in case the private company moves the court to seek reopening of the unit.

Rejecting the Central government's claim that it had achieved a lot in the last four years, Vasan

condemned the Centre for the hike in the prices of petrol and diesel and demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi bring down the prices.

"While the fishermen of Tamil Nadu are already facing a threat to their livelihood thanks to the attacks by some members of the Sri Lankan Navy, the spiralling price of diesel is like adding insult to injury. The Central government should immediately include the petrol and diesel in GST

list," he said.

Stating that the State and Central government should have used the fishing ban period for conducting peace talks with the Sri Lankan officials, Vasan suggested that with 15 days of the ban still remaining, the Central government should wake up at least now and take necessary action to ensure a peaceful environment for the fishermen when they venture into the sea at the end of the ban period.

INDIAN EXPRESS Mon, 28 May 2018
epaper.newindianexpress.com/c/29038700

LAST RESORT



Kadambur C Raju calling on a patient at the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital

Final call on Sterlite after apex court verdict, says Minister

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Thoothukudi

FIELDING media questions after visiting the injured at the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital on Sunday, Minister for Information and Publicity Kadambur C Raju said that final call on Sterlite's future would be taken once the matter is settled by the apex court.

The minister said that the re-

cent protests were uncalled for as the plant had been inoperative since April. "The State had been upfront about the situation. Despite our repeated calls not to protest against a dysfunctional plant, a massive upheaval was witnessed. Despite apprehensions, the State had allowed the protests and even provided adequate protection," Raju said.

When asked about the statement released by Anil Agarwal,

owner of Sterlite, he said that while the entrepreneur was entitled to his statement, the State government was committed to not letting the embattled company resume operations.

Talking about the May 22 incident, Raju said police resorted to firing to protect the lives of government employees at Collectorate. "The security personnel first fired tear gas shells and tried to bring order by caning the protest-

ers. When all avenues were exhausted, police resorted to opening fire," he said.

Earlier, Raju visited the injured and checked on their condition at the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital, where the kin of the injured sought a written assurance on the permanent closure of Sterlite Copper Smelter Plant. Security was beefed up on the hospital premises in view of the minister's visit.

Hike in compensation

CHENNAI: Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami on Sunday announced a hike in solatium to the victims of Thoothukudi police firing. The compensation has been increased to ₹20 lakh from ₹10 lakh for the kin of the deceased, while for the severely injured, it has been hiked to ₹5 lakh from ₹3 lakh.

INDIAN EXPRESS Mon, 28 May 2018
epaper.newindianexpress.com/c/29038957

Activists go on fast against Thoothukudi police firing

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Dharmapuri

MEMBERS of Dharmapuri Makkal Mandram, an environmental organisation that advocates organic farming, observed a hunger strike near the BSNL junction on Sunday, demanding immediate shutdown of Sterlite copper plant in Thoothukudi. They also held a memorial service for the victims killed in police firing in the port city.

Over 150 people, including women and children, participated in the one day hunger strike. Speaking on the occasion, M Umashanker, a Mandram member said the copper smelter has been causing huge damage to the environment, leading to several health issues for the people living in the town.

People have reported the harmful effects caused by the Sterlite unit and many cases have been filed. Studies say cancer and bronchitis are on the rise. The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board cannot be trusted as they are under the spell of

Sterlite, he said, demanding the permanent shutdown of the plant. The plant has always been mired in controversy and now it has resulted in the killing of 13 people in police firing, said Bala Subramanian, the organiser of the hunger strike. He wanted the state government to pass an order for its closure.

They condemned the government for its inefficient handling of the 100th day protest against Sterlite and said rules that need to be followed prior to shooting were not abided by.

Tear gas was not lobbed and water cannons were not used to disperse the anti-Sterlite protesters. Neither were rubber bullets used. Instead, assault rifles were used to target the people who were holding protests peacefully for 99 days. Only after the police attacked, the people retaliated, Umashanker said. Mandram members held a candlelight vigil in honour of those shot dead by the police. They said they want sustainable development that protects life and nature.

College students picket collectorate

Salem: As many as 40 college students clad in black shirts attempted to picket the collectorate condemning the police firing in Thoothukudi on Sunday. Police sources said that about 40 college students rallied with banners to the collectorate on Sunday morning. On information, the Town police rushed to the spot and asked the students to disperse as they were protesting without permission. Unmindful of the warnings, the students proceeded, and raised slogans urging the government to close the Sterlite Unit. They also sought action against those responsible for the death of 13 people in the Thoothukudi incident. Owing to the protest, many police personnel were deployed in and around the collectorate until the students themselves dispersed from the spot.

INDIAN EXPRESS Mon, 28 May 2018
epaper.newindianexpress.com/c/29040140

A saga of agitation against pollution

S GODSON WISELY DASS @ Thoothukudi

THE struggle against Sterlite Copper started in Thoothukudi some 23 years ago.

Sterlite Copper is a leading copper manufacturer in the country, located in the SIPCOT complex of Thoothukudi. The plant manufactures copper rod, copper wire and other copper products. The unit falls under red category (large scale) encloses a copper refinery, phosphoric acid plant and a sulphuric acid plant. The copper smelter unit was of 4 lakh tonne per annum capacity.

While the unit has faced opposition from the very beginning — it received a Consent to Establish in 1995 from TN government — public support for the anti-Sterlite movement grew after an alleged gas leak on March 23, 2013 in which at least 50 employees of a nearby company were affected. While former Chief Minister J Jayalithaa ordered closure of the unit on March 29, 2013, the SC allowed operations to continue after penalising the company ₹100 crore on April 2, that year.

The Anti-Sterlite Movement leader Thamil Manthan told *Express* that the movement formed was formed in 1995 against the copper

smelter. They protested with principles of non-violence and democratic way of rallies. Others who have been part of the movement for two decades include retired professor Fathima Babu, Thermal Raja, a local businessman and Krishnamurthy, of unorganised workers' association.

In the early years, villagers near the Sterlite plant backed rather than opposing it as they benefitted economically. Allegations of bribery also abound. "A councillor used to get ₹5 lakh and a Tata Sumo. The money could be more if you were a bigger politician," alleges one of the earlier organisers of anti-Sterlite movement.

Observers also say that the movement at that time fell apart as it was divided on caste lines in 1996. Four persons belonging to the Paravar community were shot dead in a police firing at port trust estate, which ended up in caste clash between the Nadars and Paravars.

In the past year, the movement has gained momentum as the company's proposal for a second unit with a production capacity 4 lakh TPA, received permission. Social activists, led by Fatima Babu, floated anti-Sterlite pro-

tests last August demanding that expansion works be stopped and that the unit be permanently closed. With the number of cancer-related deaths happening in and around the city, the villagers who once backed the plant wanted to scrap it. "What use is the money when our lives are at stake," says Jai Ganesh, whose father is battling cancer.

This year, villagers of Kummareddiarpuram, where the Sterlite unit expansion was planned, joined the movement. In February 2018, the Federation of Villages and Towns Against Sterlite was formed. The Federation claims to represent 18 villages and all 60 wards of Thoothukudi town. This time, the Federation took pains to ensure that all communities were represented including Thevars, Naickers, Vellalars and Dalits. Sources from the federation said that they refrained from appointing leadership to head the struggle, in a view that communal forces might hijack the agitation.

Father Loyola, who is studying peace among different communities in Thoothukudi, said the unity among the public of different castes was a reason for successful mobilisation of the protest in 2018.



Shah slams cops' Thoothukudi action

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 27

The AIADMK government is said to be worried over recent comments made by top BJP leadership regarding the law and order situation and investment climate prevailing in Tamil Nadu. The latest missile came from BJP president Amit Shah during a media interaction at Delhi, where he slammed the TN government for the way the May 22 protest against Sterlite in Thoothukudi was handled.

Answering a scribe's question, Shah said the Union home minister Rajnath Singh had raised some questions on the report sent by the TN government on the Thoothukudi police firing. The police action was unwarranted, the BJP leader said, adding that the Centre was awaiting the clarifications sought from TN.

Opposition leaders, particularly DMK working president M.K. Stalin has been repeatedly accusing the AIADMK leadership and the state government

● **BJP president Amit Shah in Delhi slammed the TN government for the way the May 22 protest against Sterlite in Thoothukudi was handle.**

● **The police firing was unwarranted, the BJP leader said, adding that the Centre was awaiting the clarifications sought from Tamil Nadu**

of functioning as lackeys of the BJP and the Centre.

In a related development, Union minister Pon Radhakrishnan repeated his charge, rather serious one, that extremist elements have taken root in Tamil Nadu and were posing grave threat to public order.

In fact, the Thoothukudi police firing would not have happened if only the state government had heeded his caution, sounded over 18 months ago, about the extremist groups infiltrating public forums, the minister told reporters on Sunday.

■ **Turn to P4**

‘Sterlite’ town nearer normalcy

DC CORRESPONDENT
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 27

Normalcy returned to violence-scarred Thoothukudi on Sunday. People began to move out of their homes as the district administration lifted the prohibitory orders under section 144 of the CrPC. This comes five days after police fired on protesters who turned violence while demanding closure of the Sterlite copper smelter unit last Tuesday.

Thirteen people, including

two women, were killed in the police firing.

State information minister Kadambur Raju visited the injured in the hospital and reviewed the situation with district collector Sandeep Nanduri. The minister told reporters at the Collectorate that the government was determined to close Sterlite permanently.

The factory had stopped work on April 9 as the state pollution control board had rejected its application for renewal of licence. ■ **P4**

We have crippled Sterlite, says min

FROM P1

“The government is clear in its intention to close down Sterlite; that’s why we allowed the people to carry on the protest for 98 days,” the minister said.

Referring to the demand from the protesters, as well as the opposition parties, that the government should issue a formal order notifying the unit’s closure, the minister explained that such a measure was not possible when the issue is pending before the Supreme Court. In any case, the government has crippled the unit by disconnecting the power and water supplies, he pointed out. Rubbishing the opposition charge that neither the CM nor any of his cabinet colleagues visited Thoothukudi to console the injured or the families of the deceased, minister Raju said discussions were held to present solatium to the families of the affected. “It has also been announced by the government that suitable jobs will be provided to one eligible person from the family of the deceased. The local administration is collecting the necessary details,” he said. Explaining the initiatives taken by the government to restore normalcy, the minister said all essential commodities are now available, eateries were functioning, markets were open and private bus operators have resumed services, all thanks to the pro-active measures of collector Sandeep Nanduri.

CM HIKES SOLATIUM TO POLICE FIRING VICTIMS

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 27

The State government has doubled the solatium from ₹10 lakh to ₹20 lakh to the family members of 13 Thoothukudi police firing victims.

In a press release here on Sunday, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami stated that the ex-gratia amount has been increased based on representation of various sections of the people received by monitoring committee headed by senior IAS officers and

direction from Madurai bench of Madras High court asking the government to consider enhancing the solatium.

Senior IAS officials who were assigned to the district to assist the healing process,—Gagandeep Singh Bedi and PWC Dawidar-, received representations from the people when they met them in Thoothukudi, it may be recalled.

Similarly, the CM has increased the assistance to persons who sustained grievous injuries in the violence to Rs five

lakh from ₹3 lakh and from ₹1 lakh to ₹1.5 lakh to the persons who suffered minor injuries.

The amount would be released from the Chief Minister's General Relief Fund, the release stated.

On May 25, the government ordered ₹10 lakh to the kin of the people who died in the police shootout, ₹3 lakh to each of persons who suffered grievous injuries and ₹1 lakh each to persons who suffered minor injuries in the police firing.

DMK DEMANDS CABINET RESOLUTION TO SHUT STERLITE

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 27

DMK working president M.K.Stalin on Sunday slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying it was 'shameful' that the PM did not even express regret for the Thoothukudi police firing and convey condolences to the victims.

"Modi is the Prime Minister of India and Thoothukudi is part of India. In all fairness, Modi should have come himself or at least, sent his ministers", Stalin told reporters at Madurai.

Later speaking to the media at Chennai, Stalin said Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam's visit to Thoothukudi on Monday was prompted by his criticism that the TN Cabinet paid no heed to the gruesome tragedy that struck the port city during the anti-Sterlite protest on May 22.

Stalin has also demanded that CM Palaniswamy should immediately convene a cabinet meeting and adopt a resolution seeking closure of the Sterlite unit. "This resolution should also be passed in the Assembly", he said.

He also demanded probe by a sitting high court judge into the Thoothukudi violence and police firing, brushing aside the inquiry commission under retired judge Aruna Jagadeesan that has been ordered by the state government.

**In all fairness,
Modi should
have come
himself or at least,
sent his
ministers**

— M.K Stalin

DMK
working
president

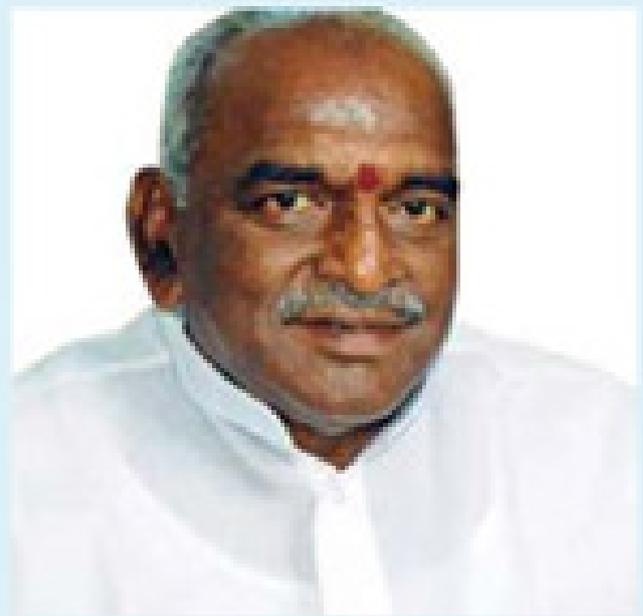


I HAVE CONSTANTLY WARNED ABOUT EXTREMISITS IN TN: PON

FROM P1

“I have been warning about the dangerous spurt in anti-national and extremist elements taking root in Tamil Nadu. That's why all these violent agitations are happening. I warned more than 18 months ago, even before the Jallikattu protest at Marina took a bad turn”, Radhakrishnan said.

“Why didn't the government take action? Now the CM is saying, others are saying anti-nationals and extremists had infil-



trated and that led to Thoothukudi violence. If the government had taken timely action to nip this extremist threat in the bud, this police firing would not have happened”, said the Union Minister, looking both worried and angry.

Thoothukudi deaths: UK Oppn wants Vedanta delisted from LSE

London: The UK's Opposition, Labour Party, has called for Vedanta to be delisted from the London Stock Exchange following the death of 13 people during violent protests against the mining giant in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu. John McDonnell, the UK's Shadow Chancellor, said removing Vedanta Resources from the London financial markets would prevent reputational damage from the "rogue" company which has been operating "illegal" mining concerns for years. "After the massacre of the protestors this week, regulators must now take action. Vedanta must be immediately delisted from the London Stock Exchange to remove its cloak of respectability, restore confidence in the governance of the Stock Exchange, and prevent further reputational damage to London's financial markets from this rogue corporation," McDonnell said in a statement on Friday. Violent protests had erupted in Thoothukudi last Tuesday as locals took to the streets demanding closure of a copper factory of the Vedanta group over pollution concerns. "The news

from Tamil Nadu that 13 protestors against Vedanta have been killed is shocking and demands action. This is a major multinational company that for years has operated illegal mining concerns, trashing the environment and forcibly evicting local people," he said. The statement from the senior Labour MP, who highlighted that campaigners and international NGOs like Amnesty International have accused Vedanta of a string of human rights and environmental abuses in India, Zambia and across the globe, came as protesters are preparing to stage a major protest against Vedanta outside the Indian High Commission in London on Saturday afternoon. Hundreds of protesters mobilised by groups such as Foil Vedanta, Tamil People in the UK, Periyar Ambedkar Study Circle, South Asia Solidarity Group, Tamil Solidarity, Parai Voice of Freedom and Veera Tamilar Munnani will stage protests alongside worldwide action to condemn the Tamil Nadu state government's "collusion" in what they have termed as "corporate massacre". Samarendra Das from Foil Vedanta also called on the

UK government to investigate and delist this company. "For 15 years since Vedanta's London listing we have been warning the British government that this criminal company is undermining democracy across India and in Zambia whilst gaining a 'cloak of respectability' from London. This corporate massacre on a peaceful environmental movement must be the last straw," he said. Karthik Kamalakannan from Tamil People in UK added: "It is disgusting to learn that a British company has put its profits above human cries for safe air to breathe and water to drink. "The leaders of this peaceful environmental movement have been targeted by snipers, which is no surprise knowing reputation of Vedanta against any uprising against them. The Internet blackout in Thoothukudi destroys all semblance of democracy. This is a sad time for Tamil people." The groups are calling on the British government to launch an inquiry into the "multiple legal, environmental and human rights violations" by Vedanta Resources. Vedanta Resources' subsidiary Sterlite Copper has

No role in Sterlite licence, says Jairam Ramesh

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 27

Former Union Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh today rejected reports in a section of the media that he had a role in granting clearance to the controversial Sterlite copper plant in Tuticorin. "The facts speak for themselves. I became Minister of Environment and Forests on May 31, 2009. The Sterlite project received three rounds of clearances on March 30, 2007, August 9, 2007 and January 1, 2009 - all before I assumed charge as the Minister concerned", he said in a statement. The senior Congress leader said on March 10, 2010 and August 11, 2010 he answered a question in the

Lok Sabha on environmental clearances asked by a Member of Parliament. He said he did so based on information made available to him in the official files of the ministry. The answer was factual and there was no hint whatsoever that he had misled the Lok Sabha. Had he done so, then the MPs concerned would have surely protested, he said. "I have consistently refrained from speaking of my tenure as Minister of Environment and Forests in the belief that my record must speak for itself. But when facts are deliberately distorted and packaged in such a manner to call into question my role, I am forced to respond", he said. Violence had erupted in



Jairam Ramesh

● I became Minister of Environment and Forests on May 31, 2009. The Sterlite project received three rounds of clearances on March 30, 2007, August 9, 2007 and January 1, 2009

Tuticorin on May 22 when a massive gathering of people took out a rally against the Sterlite copper plant. In the police firing that day and on May 23, 13 people were killed. Ramesh termed as 'horrendous' the killing of 13 people as he attacked both the Centre and state governments for its approach towards people's agitation for livelihood. "What has happened in recent days in Thoothukudi is truly horrendous. It reflects not only the state government's mindset, but also the approach of the Modi government to peo-

ple's agitations and protests on issues relating to livelihood and health", he said. He said Tuticorin reflects the dark side of the so-called 'ease of doing business' of the Union government. In a filing with the Bombay Stock Exchange, Vedanta, which runs the Sterlite copper plant, said the Tamil Nadu pollution control board had on May 23 ordered disconnection of power supply and closure of the plant. Opposition parties in Tamil Nadu like DMK, PMK, Congress and MNM had slammed the violence and police action, while top actor Rajinikanth, who is slated to launch his political party, had held the government responsible for the deaths.

to the plant, which has been offline since late March. "I assure you that I am committed to the environment, the people of Tuticorin and Tamil Nadu, and we will abide by the law of the land. It is with your wish that we would like to continue this business," Agarwal said in a video message. —PTI

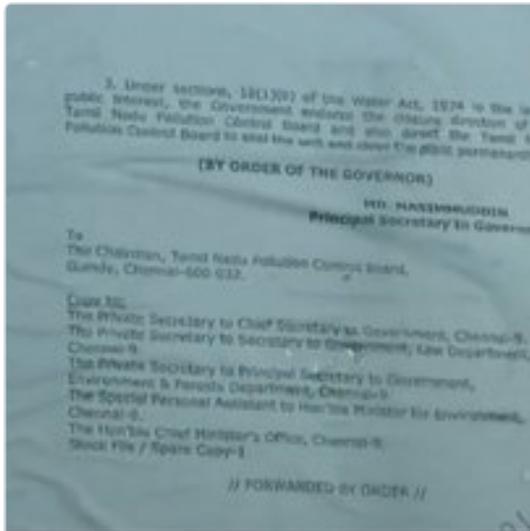
Tamil Nadu orders shut down of Sterlite copper plant

TIMESOFINDIA.COM | Updated: May 28, 2018, 19:01 IST



One of the gates of

CHENNAI: The Tamil Nadu government on Monday ordered permanent shut down of Sterlite copper unit in Tuticorin. Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami released the order against the Vedanta group plant on Monday evening, days after 13 deaths in police firing against anti-Sterlite protesters .



Visuals from outside #Sterlite plant, closure of the plant has been ordered following death of 13 people in police firing during anti-Sterlite protests in #Thoothukudi

6:57 PM - May 28, 2018

71 25 people are talking about this

Large-scale violence on May 22 against the Sterlite copper plant here and police firing led to the death of 12 persons and the next day saw one more youth succumbing to injuries sustained in police firing

"Today, the main demand of the people is that the copper plant should be permanently closed. In keeping with their demand, it is shut now. I would like to make it clear that Sterlite plant will be permanently shut," Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam said.

The "Amma's government," will do all things necessary to ensure the plant's closure, he told reporters after visiting those injured in the violence and police firing on May 22, at a state-run hospital here.

Describing the deaths of 13 people in the police firing as an "incident of grief which melted the hearts of everyone," Panneerselvam expressed his condolences to the kin of the dead and wished the injured a speedy recovery.



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Recalling the steps taken by the government for closing down the plant, he said way back in 2013, the copper plant was shut by late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa. However, Sterlite approached the National Green Tribunal and got orders for resuming operations and the government petition opposing this was still pending in the Supreme Court.

TOP COMMENT

good decision by the Government of Tamilnadu after taking 15 lives of their own state people.

Vinu A

Also, the state pollution control board did not renew its consent due to which the plant could not operate, he said.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Section 144 lifted, Tuticorin limps back to normal

TNN | May 28, 2018, 12.22 AM IST



TUTICORIN: Six days after the police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters, which claimed 13 lives, normalcy is inching back to the coastal town. Much to the relief of the public and police, prohibitory orders under section 144 of the CrPc imposed since the firing on Tuesday was lifted on Sunday. Though the public movement is back in the town, traders said that normalcy has not been completely restored. As the bodies of the deceased in the police firing were not handed over to the respective families, a section of the residents near Amdekar Nagar have expressed apprehension over the days to come.

A majority of the shops and fuel stations in VVD signal, Pole Pettai, new bus stand and old bus stand were open. But shops in the fishermen neighborhoods, including Therespuram and mini Sagayapuram were closed. Black flags were hoisted in the area condemning the deaths.

Police personnel said that the situation in Tuticorin is completely under control compared to the past few days. Since Saturday night, TNSTC has stepped up bus services to Tuticorin from Madurai and Tirunelveli districts. Similarly, since Sunday morning, private buses connecting suburbs had commenced their operations. "Finally, the city is back on its feet. But the presence of police personnel in crucial parts of the town has been putting it on back foot," said S Kennedy, resident of Millerpuram.

Routine customers of the hotels have been avoiding the town and heading to Tiruchendur since the police firing. "Normalcy is returning, but visitors from various parts of the state to Tiruchendur via Tuticorin are missing for the past three days. Our

employees are back to work with after the bus services are restored,” said S Rajesh, hotelier near old bus stand.

Later in the day, DGP T K Rajendran visited the injured victims at Tuticorin Medical College Hospital. Addressing the media, the DGP said, “Police firing that happened during the protest march were unfortunate. The district administration and police are taking efforts to restore harmony in the entire town.” He also appealed to the public to help them maintain law and order in the town. A committee has been investigating into the turn of events on May 22.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

'PM Modi's silence on Tuticorin firing disgraceful'

TNN | May 28, 2018, 12.23 AM IST



MADURAI: It is a disgrace that the Prime Minister of the country has not come forward to offer a few words of comfort to the people of Tuticorin, who have been affected by the police firing, charged DMK working president M K Stalin.

He was speaking to reporters after attending the marriage function of a party cadre. Stalin said that the Tuticorin shooting incident required the Prime Minister Modi to visit the spot immediately or at least he should have sent one of the union ministers, but the PM did not even have a few words of comfort for the people.

"This makes us wonder if he is the PM of India, which Tamil Nadu a part is of or if he is the PM for some other country," he said.

Answering a question on internet being disconnected in three districts, Stalin said that he was continuing to reiterate that the ruling government was non-functional and one couldn't ask for an explanation or justice from such a government.

Responding to information on chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami visiting Tuticorin on Monday, Stalin said that he was uncertain about the visit.

In a press statement released on Sunday, M K Stalin has said that DMK condemned the killing of people who had been protesting peacefully against an industry which was polluting their environment. It is impossible that the shooting took place without the knowledge of chief minister, DGP, Tuticorin superintendent of police Mahendran, Tirunelveli DIG Kapil Sarathkumar or south zone IG.

Hence all the above mentioned officials including the CM should be booked for murder, he has stated.

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Anti-Sterlite protest: Shooting survivor still hears gunshots

TNN | May 28, 2018, 12.22 AM IST



TUTICORIN: A Infanta, a 21-year-old BA graduate hailing from Fathima Nagar, who survived the police firing by a whisker, has been hearing gunshots in her sleep for the past five nights. Unable to come out of the trauma, Infanta is thankful to a speed breaker in the collectorate that saved her life. When the 21-year-old bent towards ground for helping her friend, who slipped in a speed-breaker, a few bullets whisked pass her including the one that took the life of 16-year-old J Snowlin.

It was a carnival gathering of local people from Fathima Nagar, Therespuram, mini Sagayapuram at Our Lady of Snows Church to protest against Sterlite. Among the thousands marched towards Tuticorin collectorate was a group including the three girls - A Infanta, J Snowlin and

Feloni. “We carried biscuits and bedsheets to camp at the collectorate as we had plans to stay in the sit-in. We braved the police barriers in VVD singal and was heading to the collectorate,” Infanta told TOI. While a section of protesters entered the collectorate, Infanta along with her friends approached the office entrance only to leave in a hurry. “We were hearing gunshots being fired from an elevated place. While running for life, Feloni slipped on a speed breaker. As I was helping her to get up, bullets whisked pass me,” Infanta said.

The 21-year-old added that Snowlin was shot dead by one of the bullets while trying to flee the collectorate. Infanta, who sustained injuries on her shoulders, claimed that there was no warning from the police before opening fire at the protesters.

“The police fired intermittently for few minutes. But we couldn’t sense the source. Snowlin was found collapsed near the speed

breaker which saved our lives, but not hers,” Infanta added. Many of the protesters, mostly women from the coastal hamlets, were taking part in protests for the first time on May 22. Young girls who participated in the protest had been very vocal all through their way till collectorate believing that they would rest for an entire day.

TAMIL NADU

SC refuses to give direction to State



Legal Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 29, 2018 00:00 IST

Plea sought report on water pollution

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to hear urgently a plea to direct the Tamil Nadu government to file a status report on the efforts taken to control arsenic and cadmium pollution in the groundwater around Sterlite Copper's smelting plant at Thoothukudi.

During mentioning hour, a bench of justices L. Nageswara Rao and Mohan M. Shantanagoudar refused to list for urgent hearing the plea filed by activist P. Shiv Kumar that Tamil Nadu should place on record steps taken to remove the copper sludge allegedly generated by the company.

The petition also sought a report on the implementation of the guidelines of the National Human Rights Commission for registration of information regarding the deaths caused in the police firing at Thoothukudi on May 22 and 23.

'Fundamental rights hit'

The court had earlier, on May 25, refused to entertain a petition seeking a CBI probe into the deaths.

That petition, which was filed by advocate G.S. Mani, had alleged that the deaths were a "clear case of murder". It had said the "fundamental rights of life, liberty, safety, security, peace, free movement, basic amenity (internet service) and equality" of the public in Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari were affected.

The petition had said the "the police fire and killing of more than 10 people in Thoothukudi district is a pre-planned act done by highly influential State police officers and the then District collector with the help of the State".

TAMIL NADU

OPS visits victims, terms firing tragic



STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 29, 2018 00:00 IST

'Govt. paying heed to public demand'

Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam on Monday termed "tragic" the police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters on May 22 and May 23, killing 13 of them.

Speaking to reporters after visiting some of the injured at the Thoothukudi Government Medical College Hospital, he said the 47 victims under treatment were in good health and were expecting a speedy recovery. Terming the violence and the subsequent police action as "tragic", he recalled that the Sterlite unit was closed down following a government order in March 2013. The company challenged the order in the National Green Tribunal and got a verdict in its favour to reopen the plant.

The State government had moved the Supreme Court challenging the NGT's order. However, Sterlite Copper has not been operational since April 9, 2018, as its plea seeking renewal of the 'consent to operate' was dismissed by the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board. Now, people's demand was to close down the unit and the State government was acting accordingly.

Following the May 22 incidents, the Collector, along with Superintendent of Police Murali Rambha and two senior IAS officers (who are in the town as monitoring officers), acted swiftly to restore peace and normalcy in the town, he said. The Deputy CM denied that the police were conducting house-to-house searches and claimed that no arrest was made from homes.

Mr. Panneerselvam was accompanied by Fisheries Minister D. Jayakumar and Collector Sandeep Nanduri as he met the victims and consoled their families. Later, Mr. Panneerselvam inspected the Collectorate where several vehicles were torched during the protest rally. Information Minister Kadambur C. Raju accompanied them.

Three Deputy Tahsildars issued firing orders



Pon Vasanth B.A.

MADURAI, MAY 29, 2018 00:00 IST

FIRs blame it solely on protesters; activists deny charge, dub police version a figment of imagination

The First Information Reports (FIRs) filed in Thoothukudi Sipcot, Thoothukudi North and Thoothukudi South police stations in relation to the police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters on May 22 (Tuesday) and May 23 (Wednesday), reveal that the shooting orders were issued by officers in the rank of Deputy Tahsildars.

While the three FIRs solely blame the protesters for “violence” that “forced” the officials to issue the firing order, activists alleged that the events described in the FIRs were fabricated.

The FIR filed at the Thoothukudi Sipcot police station, based on a complaint

by P. Sekar, Special Deputy Tahsildar (Election), said 10,000 protesters marched to the Collectorate with “deadly weapons” on Tuesday morning, in violation of the prohibitory order issued under Section 144 of the CrPC.

Alleging that they hurled petrol bombs, burnt vehicles and attacked the public and police personnel with an “intention to murder”, Mr. Sekar said the police tried, in vain, to disperse the protesters with warnings, tear gas and a lathicharge.

Stating that he had to issue a firing order as a last resort, the official said the police opened fire in the air first and at the crowd later, in which two were injured on the Collectorate premises. According to the FIR, though the police tried to take the injured to hospital in an ambulance, the protesters attacked the ambulance as well. However, Henri Tiphagne, executive director of People’s Watch, a civil rights group, alleged that there were no ambulances to take the injured. He also questioned the claims of police that they resorted to warnings, tear gas and lathicharge before opening fire.

M. Kannan, Thoothukudi Zonal Deputy Tahsildar, was the complainant in the FIR filed in the Thoothukudi North police station for the firing at Threspuram on Tuesday afternoon. The FIR said 400 men and 100 women entered the police quarters near the ESI Hospital on the North Beach Road with sticks, petrol bombs and machetes and attacked the police and damaged property.

A team headed by the Thoothukudi District Superintendent of Police, which rushed to the spot, opened fire on the orders of Mr. Kannan after the warnings, lobbing of teargas and a lathicharge failed, the FIR said.

‘Blatant lie’

J. Jansi, 42, of Threspuram was injured in the firing and taken to the hospital by the police, but doctors declared her brought dead, as per the FIR.

K. Samuel Raj, State general secretary, Tamil Nadu Untouchability Eradication Front (TNUEF), termed the FIR a blatant lie.

“According to her family and eyewitness accounts, a police vehicle came with sirens when a group of people at Threspuram was discussing the morning’s events. As the crowd dispersed, the police attacked the houses and damaged properties. Jansi was shot from the police van when she yelled using curse

words,” he alleged.

The third FIR, filed on the complaint of S. Chandran, Thoothukudi Divisional Excise Officer, at Thoothukudi South police station, provided a similar narrative that ended in firing at Anna Nagar on Wednesday, in which one person was killed.

A. Marx, a human rights activist who, along with his team, obtained the FIRs as part of a fact-finding mission, said all the narratives in the FIRs were fabricated to exonerate the police and the district administration.

A. Kathir, executive director of Evidence, an NGO, questioned why the police could not release any CCTV footage showing the protesters engaging in arson.

“Importantly, why was the District Collector not present in Thoothukudi when the incidents happened?” he asked.

TAMIL NADU

Vaiko files plaint against 'fake news'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, MAY 29, 2018 00:00 IST

MDMK general secretary Vaiko on Monday lodged a complaint with the City Police Commissioner that miscreants were spreading false news on social media about him and a few others that they were among the beneficiaries of Sterlite.

In his complaint, Mr. Vaiko said that pictures with logos of popular television channels were being posted online to make it appear as if the channels had telecast the news. He said the channels had told him that they did not telecast any such news.

Mr. Vaiko mentioned his long struggle against Sterlite from 1994. He said the posts were made with an intention to bring bad reputation to him.

He named Arumugam Seemanin Thambi and R. Soundarrajan as the ones who circulated the posts. Mr. Vaiko wanted the police to book a case against them for posting defamatory content, and initiate criminal action.

TAMIL NADU

Former Chief Justice welcomes move

Mohamed Imranullah S.

CHENNAI, MAY 29, 2018 00:00 IST

Says he had ordered closure of the plant in 2010 after personal verification

Justice N. Paul Vasanthakumar, one of the two former judges who had ordered closure of Sterlite's copper smelting plant in Thoothukudi district during their tenure in the Madras High Court in September 2010, has welcomed an order passed by the State government on Monday directing Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) to close the plant permanently and seal the first unit.

Mr. Justice Vasanthakumar was elevated as the Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir High Court in February 2015 and retired from service in March 2017. When contacted, he said the verdict delivered by a Division Bench comprising Justice Elipe Dharma Rao (since dead) and himself on September 28, 2010 in the Madras High Court was a well merited judgment passed after personal verification of complaints related to environmental issues.

“When I visited Thoothukudi for some other work, I personally saw the environmental degradation that was caused due to the industry. I could see for myself how the groundwater had been polluted due to the plant. It would be apt to say that I was able to personally feel the heat over there. After the visit, I apprised Dharma Rao about the situation and it was only after that we decided to order the closure of the plant,” he recalled.

The former judge pointed out that the first case against the copper plant was filed by the National Trust for Clean Environment (NTCE), a non-governmental organisation based in Chennai, in 1996.

During the course of the hearing, the court directed the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) to inspect the plant and submit a report.

In its November 17, 1998 report, NEERI had indicated that the Centre as well as State government had granted clearance and consent respectively in contravention of the relevant statutory requirements and had permitted the plant to be established within 25 km of an ecologically fragile area. It was also pointed out that the permission had been granted by relaxing the green belt requirements without adequate and acceptable justifications.

TAMIL NADU

Land allocation in Thoothukudi for Sterlite Copper expansion cancelled



PTI

CHENNAI, MAY 29, 2018 12:28 IST

The move comes a day after the Tamil Nadu state government ordered the permanent closure of the plant.

The allotment of land for the proposed expansion of Vedanta group's copper plant in Tuticorin was on Tuesday cancelled "in larger public interest" by the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu Ltd (SIPCOT), an official release said.

The move comes a day after the Tamil Nadu government ordered the state Pollution Control Board to seal and "permanently" close the Sterlite Copper plant following last week's protests during which 13 people were killed in police firing.

“As the allotment of land for the proposed expansion has been made by SIPCOT, in larger public interest, the land allotment made by SIPCOT for proposed expansion of copper smelter plant (Phase-2) by Vedanta Ltd. is hereby cancelled,” SIPCOT said in its communication to the Vedanta group.

“The land price collected for the said land allotment will be refunded as per the norms of SIPCOT,” it said.

There have been a series of agitations against the establishment of a copper plant at the SIPCOT industrial complex in Tuticorin, about 600 km from here, expressing concerns about the pollution caused, it added.

An official release here said, “The cancellation of allotment of 342.22 acres of land has been made in larger public interest and this has been communicated to the company.”

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami had on Monday said the state government had issued the directive to seal and ‘permanently’ close the copper unit in deference to the ‘sentiments’ of the people.

“In deference to the opinion and sentiments of the general public, it was decided to close down the Sterlite plant and a Government Order has been issued today,” he had said.

Vedanta Ltd. termed the closure “unfortunate” and said it would decide the future course of action after studying the development. The Madras High Court had on May 23 stayed the expansion of the Vedanta’s copper smelter plant in Tuticorin district on a petition filed by environmental activist Fathima Babu.

The petitioner submitted that Vedanta Ltd. should be restrained from carrying out activities in the lands on which the proposed copper smelter-unit II was being constructed.

The court had also directed the Centre to submit within four months a report after holding a public hearing in the district to invite public opinion on the plan for expansion. The locals were protesting for the closure of the factory for 99 days.

Protesters turned violent on May 22, the 100th day of their stir, and 13 people were killed in police action against them last Tuesday and Wednesday.

NATIONAL

Legal opinion divided over Sterlite closure



Krishnadas Rajagopal

NEW DELHI, MAY 29, 2018 00:00 IST

Experts say crucial matter is whether due process was followed for ordering the plant shut

Legal experts are divided in their opinions over the decision of the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board to cut the electricity and shut down the Sterlite plant at Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu.

Noted environmental lawyer M.C. Mehta terms it as “fire-fighting” by the Tamil Nadu government, which had “slept for years” only to wake up after the recent bloodshed in police firing.

Tanneries closure

However, former Solicitor-General Mohan Parasaran said the Board flexed its “wide” powers under Section 33A of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act of, 1974 and Section 31A of the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 only after complying with the “due process requirements”.

He compares this use of executive power to the closure of over 900 tanneries in Tamil Nadu. The government order was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1996 in the Vellore Citizens Welfare Forum verdict, which said though “industry is of vital importance to the country as it generates foreign exchange and provides employment avenues, it has no right to destroy the ecology, degrade the environment and pose as a health hazard.”

Experts agrees that if the Tamil Nadu Board’s closure order is challenged in court, the test would be whether the principles of natural justice were observed by the Board before the exercise of such power.

Justice Muralidhar, in the Splendor Landbase verdict, interprets the correct procedure for use of Section 31A and 33A to shut down an industry.

For one, no “corrective steps” can be taken by a Pollution Control Board under Section 31A and 33A “without issuing a show cause notice and without giving an opportunity to the alleged violator to rectify the defects detected during an inspection of the premises carried out in accordance with the relevant rules”.

Experts point out that the Supreme Court has categorically held in its Indian Council for Enviro-Legal Action case judgment that a Pollution Control Board can order closure of any industry or stop basic facilities to it only if such a direction is necessary for effective implementation of the provisions of the Water or Air Act. That is the test ahead.

TODAY'S PAPER

Sterlite Copper told to shut shop in T.N.



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, MAY 29, 2018 00:00 IST

State government orders “permanent closure” of plant

Sterlite Copper, the Vedanta Group’s copper smelter plant in Thoothukudi, was sealed on Monday evening, shortly after the Tamil Nadu Environment and Forests Department issued a two-page Government Order for its “permanent” closure. Vedanta termed the decision “unfortunate.”

The decision to close down the factory that directly employed around 3,500 workers, including 2,500 on contract (since put on notice), comes against the backdrop of the killing of 13 persons in police firing at an anti-Sterlite rally a week ago.

The order said, “Under Sections 18(1)(b) of the Water Act 1974, in the larger

public interest, the government endorse the closure direction of the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) and also direct the TNPCB to seal the unit and close the plant permanently.” It pointed out that the TNPCB did not renew the ‘consent to operate’ to Vedanta Ltd.’s copper smelter plant in its order dated April 9, 2018.

Power supply cut

“Subsequently, on May 23, the TNPCB has also issued directions for closure and disconnection of power supply to the unit. The power supply has been disconnected on May 24,” it said.

Sterlite Copper’s CEO P. Ramnath had recently claimed that the company was responsible for generating indirect employment for an estimated 30,000-40,000 people.

“The Amma [former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa] government has issued an order to have the Sterlite plant closed down permanently in deference to the sentiments of the people of Thoothukudi,” Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami told journalists in the evening after chairing a meeting of legislators at the AIADMK headquarters in Chennai.

Mr. Palaniswami, who earlier met a cross-section of traders, fishermen and the church members for over an hour, along with Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam and other Ministers, told the media that the representatives of Thoothukudi had conveyed to him that “the closure of the plant is the demand of all [in the area].”

To a question on the proceedings in the Madras High Court and the Supreme Court on the issue, he pointed out that there was no stay order. The case was under way. “We have taken this decision as a mark of respecting the feelings of the people. We are doing what we consider is good for the people,” he said. The Chief Minister added that Mr. Panneerselvam and other Ministers went to Thoothukudi in the morning, met the affected people and assured them that proper medical treatment would continue to be provided. “If they desire, they can be shifted to hospitals of their choice,” he said.

In a stock exchange announcement, the Sterlite confirmed the receipt of order from the Tamil Nadu government directing the TNPCB to seal its ‘Copper Smelter Plant 1 at Thoothukudi District, Tamil Nadu’ and to close the said plant permanently.

TAMIL NADU

TN government orders closure of Sterlite copper smelter



J. Praveen Paul Joseph

TUTICORIN (TN), MARCH 30, 2013 12:20 IST

Power supply cut; Vaiko says shutdown victory for local people

Mired in controversy in recent days, Sterlite Industries Limited's copper smelter in Tuticorin was shut down on Saturday.

Operations in the plant came to a standstill in the wake of an order from the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board. Tuticorin Collector Ashish Kumar instructed officials to inspect the Vedanata group company to make sure that the production lines remained shut.

The closure order has come after a gas leak was reported in the early hours on March 23.

Following emission of sulphur dioxide from Sterlite, people in the neighbourhood experienced unease and complained of suffocation, sneezing and burning sensation in the eye.

D. Dhanavel, General Manager, Projects, Sterlite Copper, said the closure order was received on Friday night.

An order was served by Revenue Divisional Officer of Tuticorin, K. Latha, to the company on March 24, seeking explanation for the incident within five days.

A team comprising Revenue Divisional Officer of Tuticorin, officials from the Pollution Control Board, Revenue and Tangedco has been carrying out

inspections at the sulphuric acid plant, the phosphoric acid plant and other plants since 8 a.m., Ms. Latha said.

The Collector, when contacted, told The Hindu that power lines to the company were disconnected.

Tuticorin Tangedco Superintending Engineer, R. Amirtha Rathnakumar, said power was cut at 12.21 a.m. on Saturday.

Activists celebrate

Activists protesting against the functioning of the copper smelter celebrated the shutdown, but the company insisted that it had been in operation for 17 years with all requisite clearances and approvals.

It said it would explain the factual position to the TNPCB and cooperate fully with the authorities so that it could restart operations soon.

Calling it a victory for the local population, Vaiko, general secretary, MDMK, in a statement thanked Chief Minister Jayalalithaa for her decision to close down the smelter. He termed Sterlite as a 'noxious industry' causing harm to the lives of people. Pollution in all forms from Sterlite and its baneful effects impacted the livelihoods of farmers, fishermen and traders as farm lands turned unproductive and groundwater and seawater became unusable.

Government Order an eyewash: Stalin



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, MAY 29, 2018 00:00 IST

‘CM should’ve acted against top policemen’

315

DMK working president M.K. Stalin on Monday described the Government Order directing the closure of the Sterlite Copper smelter in Thoothukudi as an eyewash and a drama.

Talking to reporters after meeting party MLAs ahead of the Assembly session, which begins on Tuesday, the Opposition leader said, “It [the G.O.] is like telling [the company] — you go to court and get the relief.”

As a responsible Chief Minister, Edappadi K. Palaniswami should have taken action against the DGP, the DIG and other senior law enforcement officers for the police firing. But no action had been taken, he said, adding, “We will raise all these issues in the Assembly tomorrow.”

The DMK legislators were asked to be present at Fort St. George at 10 a.m. to decide on the course of action the party would take on the first day of the Assembly session. “We had been asked to come half-an-hour early,” said an MLA.

As the Opposition is expected to raise the Thoothukudi police firing issue on the first day of the session itself, the police have beefed up security around the Secretariat-Assembly complex.

At the meeting, Mr. Stalin told the MLAs to participate in the debates, and that he would decide who gets to speak on which subject. The Opposition party is also expected to raise several cut motions to highlight the plight of the public on various fronts.

The delay in holding the local body polls and the failure of the government in obtaining an exemption for Tamil Nadu from the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test are among the issues that the DMK is expected to raise.

Vedanta terms closure unfortunate

Chennai: Condemning the State government's decision to order permanent closure of Sterlite Copper plant in Thoothukudi, Vedanta Limited on Monday issued an official statement calling the development 'unfortunate'. "Closure of Sterlite Copper plant is an unfortunate development, especially since we have operated the plant for over 22 years in most transparent and sustainable way... We will study the order and decide on the future course of action," said the statement. Meanwhile, the company's secretary and compliance officer intimidated the Bombay Stock Exchange under SEBI rules to seal the company's Copper Smelter Plant-1 and close it permanently.

Kamal writes to Governor

Chennai: Makkal Needhi Maiam founder Kamal Haasan wrote to Governor Banwarilal Purohit on Monday regarding the police excesses in Thoothukudi, which resulted in the killing of 13 anti-Sterlite protesters. The actor-turned-politician asked the Governor to ensure the lives of citizens are not compromised for political gains. In the letter, Kamal lashed out at the State government by claiming the inquiry commission it had set up was a mere fact-finding mission which did not have authority to pass an order or punish the guilty. He even accused the government of trying to save its skin by handing out meagre compensations and ordering transfers of bureaucrats.

DMDK stages protest in Chennai

Chennai: Around 300 cadre of the DMDK, led by its former-president Vijayakanth, staged an agitation in front of the Collector here on Monday, protesting against the police firing at the anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi on May 22. They raised various slogans against the police shoot-out which claimed the lives of 13 persons and sought a proper investigation into the incident and stringent action against the police and revenue authorities. Speaking to mediapersons, Vijayakanth said, "The police murdered 13 people in the name of maintaining law and order. Hence, the state government should take moral responsibility for the shoot-out."

DEPUTY TAHSILDARS ORDERED FIRING

Reveals FIRs at three police stations – SIPCOT, North and South – in the coastal town; former High Court judge says officials can be authorised to hold such powers through a G.O.

Dy Tahsildars have powers of executive magistrates

C SHIVAKUMAR @Chennai

THE deputy tahsildars, who have been named in the First Information Report for giving orders to fire at anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi, have the powers of executive magistrate if they are notified by the government under the Criminal Procedure Code, according to former judge of the Madras High Court K Chandru. Chandru told *Express* that power can be delegated from the Collector to Revenue Divisional Officer to tahsildar to zonal deputy tahsildar. "For all this, a Government Order is required," said the judge who had been witness to various incidents during his tenure as a judge.

He said all this cooking-up of events had happened after the incident. "As soon as the agitation started, they would have issued a notification diversifying the power of executive magistrate," he said, adding that firing order given by the magistrate is a joke.

"How would they have got statement from him? They will not go before the commission of enquiry and they even won't have problem in deposing falsely before the commission," alleged Chandru.

"In every police firing, this is what happens. I have been seeing it from 1971 during several enquiry commissions. They will come and depose that they only gave the orders. I myself am an eyewitness to Annamalai University lathicharge. The police never gave such a warning. But before the commission they would depose that they gave warning and fired in the air. In Paramakudi, it was an ex-parte firing and they can say whatever they want. In the end, the Commission will justify the firing and say all rules have been followed. It is like a cat-and-mouse game," he said.

"If you have an effective criminal lawyer and a court where the hearing is held, then the whole theory could be demolished," he added.



Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam taking stock of the damage inflicted by rioters | V KARTHIKALAGU

OPS visits injured at Thoothukudi hospital

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Thoothukudi

THE State government will take all legal steps to permanently shut down the Sterlite Copper unit functioning in Thoothukudi, said Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam after visiting 47 survivors of police firing at Thoothukudi medical college hospital (ThMCH) here on Monday.

Six days after the incident that left 13 people dead, Deputy Chief Minister OPS landed in the town on Monday.

Panneerselvam visited the victims

and consoled them while wishing for fast recovery. OPS told reporters that the 47 injured were recuperating and they were given an increased solatium of ₹2 lakh each, in addition to previous ₹3 lakh earmarked earlier.

Claiming that the government will not encourage any project objected by people, he assured permanent

closure of the Sterlite Copper and the government will take legal procedures to close the unit, he added.

Meanwhile, Panneerselvam visited the riot site on collectorate premises in the presence of collector Sandeep Nanduri, ministers Jayakumar and Kadambur C Raju.

He took stock of the damages dur-

ing the post gunfire violence before leaving to Thoothukudi airport.

According to officials, compensation of over ₹5.44 crore has been disbursed to the victims, including ₹20 lakh each for the kin of the 13 deceased, ₹5 lakh each for 39 seriously injured and ₹1.5 lakh each for 21 suffered minor injuries during the police firing happened on May 22 and the violence.

Following local holiday for Vaikasi Visagam on Monday, the weekly grievance meeting was not convened.

In this very limited period of time, I have to learn English, learn technical terms of science in that language and have to cover the entire syllabus of

Brindha Devi, A student

S GODSON WISELY DAAS @Thoothukudi

THE question on everyone's mind as to who passed the order to open fire at anti-Sterlite protesters was answered on Monday when copies of FIRs registered at three police stations – SIPCOT, North and South – in the town revealed that the go-ahead to gun down agitators was given by three deputy tahsildars.

On Tuesday last, the public protest against Sterlite Copper took a violent turn, leaving 13 dead and over a 100 injured. Four incidents of police firings were reported from the collectorate premises, on the NH, Thesurapuram and Anna Nagar. The unprecedented surge in the number of protesters caught the police unawares, with the mob surmounting barricades, resulting in lathi-charge and teargas shelling, especially at Madathur, VVD signal, Mathakovil and FCI go-down junction.

When the crowd reached collectorate around 10.30 am, they were stopped in their tracks by armed police. A skirmish was reported and the police opened fire. As the then collector N Venkatesh was not on the premises, questions were raised over who ordered the firing. Later, based on a complaint from Special Deputy Tahsildar (Election) Sekar, the SIPCOT police registered a case against 400 people. Sekar, in the complaint, said he ordered the police to open fire against rioters.

Later, he ordered the police to open fire when the mob reached the residential quarters of Sterlite Copper employees, the FIR copy says.

In the FIR filed at North police station, protesters were arrested based on a complaint given by Zonal Deputy Tahsildar M Kannan. The deputy tahsildar Kannan admitted to ordering police to open fire at Thesurapuram. In the FIR filed against the mob at Anna Nagar, Deputy Tahsildar (Excise) Chandran said he ordered police firing on May 23.

Government officials claimed that police opened fire at the protesters when they reached the collectorate raising anti-Sterlite slogans. A shopkeeper said that he ran out of his shop the moment reports of gunfire were heard. "The protesters hurled stones at the collectorate. I heard the report of gunfire from the highway and later from the collectorate," he added.



Tue, 29 May 2018
epaper.newindianexpress.com/c/29066728

Thoothukudi firing was planned: fact-finding team

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Tirunelveli

ALL India People's Forum (AIPF) fact-finding team on Thoothukudi police firing on Monday said that the firing on May 22 and 23 on the people protesting against the Sterlite Copper was premeditated.

Talking at a press meet here, The team said that there was no prior warning or any attempt to disperse the crowd before the police firing.

They said that the people in Thoothukudi had alleged that goons and police in plain cloths infiltrated the rally and instigated violence. There was burning of vehicles and building even before people reached the collectorate, they said.

The people say that instead of stopping the protesters or issuing pre-shooting warn-

ings like using water cannon or tear gas shells, the police allowed them to go near the collectorate before resorting to firing, the team said. They added that the police used tear gas shells in some places to justify their violent act.

The AIPF team that included R Vidyasagar, a social scientist, Clinton, an advocate from Bengalure, G Ramesh and Abdul Nizam, advocates from Tirunelveli, and Sundarraaj, a social activist from Tirunelveli said that they had visited Kumareddyapuram, Veerapandipuram, Pandarampatti, and the settlements of Anna Nagar and Therapuram in Thoothukudi on May 27.

The team also visited the government general hospital in Thoothukudi and interacted with the patients who sustained severe injuries in the police action.



OPS pays visit to injured at govt hospital

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Thoothukudi

THE State government will take all legal steps to permanently shut down the Sterlite Copper unit functioning in Thoothukudi, said Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam after visiting 47 survivors of police firing at Thoothukudi medical college hospital (ThMCH) here on Monday.

Six days after the incident that left 13 people dead, Deputy Chief Minister OPS landed in the town on Monday.

Panneerselvam visited the victims and consoled them while wishing for fast recovery. OPS told reporters that the 47 injured were recuperating and they were given an increased solatium of ₹2 lakh each, in addition to previous ₹3 lakh earmarked earlier.

Claiming that the government will not encourage any project objected by people, he assured permanent closure of the Sterlite Copper and the government will take legal procedures to close the unit, he added.

Meanwhile, Panneerselvam visited the riot site on collectorate premises in the presence of collector Sandeep Nanduri, ministers Jayakumar and Kadambur C Raju.

He took stock of the damages during the post gunfire violence before leaving to Thoothukudi airport.

According to officials, compensation of over ₹5.44 crore has been disbursed to the victims, including ₹20 lakh each for the kin of the 13 deceased, ₹5 lakh each for 39 seriously injured and ₹1.5 lakh each for 21 suffered minor injuries during the police firing happened on May 22 and the violence.

Following local holiday for Vaikasi Visagam on Monday, the weekly grievance meeting was not convened.



Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam taking stock of the damage inflicted by rioters | V KARTHIKALAGU

Dy Tahsildars have powers of executive magistrates

Chennai: The deputy tahsildars, who have been named in the FIR for giving orders to fire at protesters in Thoothukudi, have the powers of executive magistrate if they are notified by the government under the CrPC, according to former judge of the Madras High Court K Chandru. "As soon as the agitation started, they would have issued a notification diversifying the power of executive magistrate," he said, adding that firing order given by magistrate is a joke.

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Dy tahsildars had ordered police to open fire: Govt

M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 28

As the opposition parties were demanding the government to disclose, who issued the order for police firing that claimed 12 lives on May 22 and one the following day in Thoothukudi against the anti-Sterlite protesters, two deputy tahsildars and a zonal officer (prohibition) were found to have issued the orders for the firing.

Cases have been registered in this regard by Thoothukudi SIPCOT police and Thoothukudi North police and investigation is on, according to police sources.

According to the first

The deputy tahsildar, Sekar in his complaint too has stated that the mob went unruly and uncontrollable and set ablaze the vehicles and damaged public building on their way to the Collectorate

information report (FIR) filed in this regard at SIPCOT police station, based on the complaint of P Sekar, deputy tahsildar (election), it has been stated that since the anti-Sterlite activists, along with the 'Naam Thamilar Katchi', 'Makkal Adhikaram' and 'Puratchihara Ilaigarnar Mu-

nnani' led around 10,000 people from the nearby villages of Kumareddyapuram, Pandarampatti, Meelavittan, Therkku Veerapandiyapuram, Madathur, Mathakoil region, Therespuram, Fathima Nagar and Lion's Town to lay siege the district collector's office on May 22 morning, despite prohibitory order was clamped under section 144 of Cr.P.C. since the previous day night.

Moreover, the deputy tahsildar, Sekar in his complaint too has stated that the mob went unruly and uncontrollable and set ablaze the vehicles and damaged public building on their way to the Collectorate. ■ P4

NCSC starts probe into death of Dalits

DC CORRESPONDENT
THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 28

National Commission for Scheduled Castes commenced its enquiry on Thursday into the death of the Dalits killed in the police action during the Thoothukudi riot on May 22. The vice chairman of the commission, L. Murugan, speaking to mediapersons here in Thoothukudi said that the relatives of four Dalit victims of police action - Selva Sekar, Kandhaiah, Jeyaraman and Kaliappan - had been summoned on the first day of the commission's enquiry.

The vice chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes too added that the commission too has plans to enquire the revenue and police officers include Thoothukudi district collector N. Venkatesh and former district superintendent of police Mahendran. "The present officers in charge of the ongoing investigation process too will be summoned for our enquiry on on June 30," said Murugan, who too added that the injured people irrespective of their community too could meet the National Commission for Scheduled Castes on any of the three days to make complaints.

DMK, Cong responsible for Thoothukudi violence: Pon

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 28

Union Minister of State for Finance and Shipping Pon Radhakrishnan lashed out at the opposition DMK and its ally Congress for the violent incidents in Thoothukudi and branded them as "culprits."

"Both these parties which are responsible for the 'murder' of 13 persons have no right to talk about Sterlite issue or police firing, as they are the culprits," Mr. Radhakrishnan said on Monday.

Expressing in similar vein, BJP state president Dr. Tamilisai Soudararajan charged the DMK working president M. K. Stalin with diverting the attention of the people on all key issues whether it be Sterlite, Cauvery issue, hydrocarbon, Neutrino or Gail project, "to serve his political interest." "His plan is to convert Tamil Nadu into a battleground to serve his political interests," she said and advised Mr. Stalin to participate in healthy debates in TN Assembly rather than leading his party to stage a walk out from the Assembly House.

Speaking to reporters at the airport here, Dr. ³²²Tamilisai claimed that



Both these parties(DMK, Cong) which

are responsible for the 'murder' of 13 persons have no right to talk about Sterlite issue or police firing, as they are the culprits

as people were feeling insecure, agitations like those in Thoothukudi against the Sterlite copper smelting plant, are slipping into the hands of "secessionists."

"So, in my view, the government should at the first instance, consider the demands of the people and take a favourable decision. This will help to create a healthy situation," she asserted.

Welcoming Deputy CM O. Panneerselvam's visit to Thoothukudi earlier in the day, the BJP chief urged the government to take steps to address the concerns of the people of Thoothukudi and facilitate a congenial atmosphere.

Protests continue

Thoothukudi: Thanking the Chief Minister for issuing the order to close down Sterlite industry, the Thoothukudi district anti-Sterlite people's federation, however, said that they would continue with the token protest until the factory is completely removed.

Speaking to media at Kumareddyapuram, Makesh, one of the coordinators of the people's federation said that they have some more demands. "We demand that government withdraw all cases registered against anti-Sterlite protesters, and register murder cases against officers responsible for the police firing that claimed 13 lives and injured more than 85 people," said Makesh, adding that they wouldn't stop protesting till these demands are met.

Rajesh of Panddarampatti village, however, vacated the protest venue but warned that they would launch a more vigorous protest if government does not contest the factory successfully in court.

Nakkeeran, another coordinator of the Thoothukudi district anti-Sterlite People's Federation, welcomed the government's decision but wanted the factory to be full dismantled from there.

Sterlite plant soaked in controversy from day 1

M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 28

The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) district engineer in the presence of the Thoothukudi district collector, district police superintendent and the local tahsildar sealed the Sterlite copper factory amidst the great joy of Thoothukudi residents who have been fighting for this for more than 23 years since the foundation stone was laid in 1994.

District environmental engineer P S Livingston along with Thoothukudi tahsildar, Sivagamaundari

locked the main entrance of the factory with a iron chain and sealed it.

Later, speaking to the media, district collector Sandeep Nanduri said that the decision was taken by government in accordance with the collective will of the people.

Affirming that this is a permanent closure, the district collector said that he had instructed the company administration to ensure that no employee was present inside the factory henceforth.

However, the factory being a chemical unit with phosphoric acid and sulphuric

plants that should be handled with utmost care, the collector said, adding, pollution control board officers in coordination with engineers of the factory would take further action for the safe disposal of chemicals and equipment within the unit in a week.

Sterlite industry was born in controversy in 1994 when the foundation stone was laid by the then chief minister J Jayalalithaa. It was closed down for the first time on November 23, 1998.

The industry fought the closure decision within a week and resumed operation.

The second closure was on September 28, 2008. This was done on the verdict of the Madras High Court in a case filed by the National Trust for Clean Environment.

The MDMK leader Vaiko, CITU and CPI also impleaded themselves in this case. This time the copper major needed just three days to quash the Madras high court order in an appeal at the Supreme Court.

The company was again closed down for the third time by a government order during the Jayalalithaa-led AIADMK rule on March 29, 2013. Government took this

step following a gas leakage that affected people in Thoothukudi city.

However, the Supreme Court once again permitted the factory to resume operations, but delivered a severe indictment and ordered the company to pay a fine of ₹100 crore.

The present government order, according to a TNPCB source, will be a real great blow to the copper rod manufacturer, as unlike the earlier orders issued by the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB), this one is issued directly by the State Environment secretary.

HM clash with Dalit outfit averted in Tiruchy

Tiruchy: Thanks to the timely intervention of the police, a clash between members of the Dalit party, Vidhuthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK), and Hindu Munnani (HM) activists were averted near the Collectorate at Tiruchy on Monday. The trouble started when the VCK cadres led by their state propaganda wing deputy secretary, M.K Murugan, were demonstrating in protest against the police firing at Thoothukudi recently which claimed 13 lives and caused injuries to many others. Police said a group of HM volunteers led by Tiruchy district Hindu Munnani president K. Gopalakrishnan, who were on a propaganda yatra for their Tiruchy division conference to be held at Ariyalur on June 17, passed by the VCK demonstration point, when both groups raised slogans. The VCK cadres then allegedly started attacking the car in which HM activists were traveling with their flag masts. Following this, the HM activists stopped their car and got down and started an argument with the VCK cadres about the incident, which almost resulted in a free-for-all, and were about to clash against each other.

■ CM, Dy say they have acted for common good in shutting down copper smelter Sterlite plant closed for good

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 28

In an order that is bound to resonate among the people, especially those who have been battling the environmental problems being caused by the copper smelter, the Tamil Nadu government ordered the permanent closure of the Sterlite's plant in Thoothukudi on grounds of pollution of air and water.

In doing so, the government has met the main demand of the protesters and thus paved the way for the agitation to die down.

A GO issued by Principal Secretary Md Nasimmuddin directed the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) to "seal the unit and close the plant permanently" in the "larger public interest", thereby endorsing the Board's closure direction to the smelter unit in the SIPCOT industrial complex in the port town.

The Tamil Nadu pollution control board (TNPCB) district engineer, in the presence of Thoothukudi district collector and district police superintendent and local tahsildar, sealed the Sterlite copper factory amid great joy of the Thoothukudiites, who have been waiting for this moment for more than 23 years since the foundation stone was laid in 1994. The District environmental engineer, P S Livingston along with Thoothukudi tahsildhar, Sivagamaundari locked the main entrance of the factory with an iron chain and sealed it.

The GO said it had been brought to government's



Thoothukudi tahsildhar, Sivagamaundari locked the main entrance of the factory with an iron chain and sealed it.

notice that TNPCB had not renewed the consent to operate to Vedanta Limited for running the copper smelter unit and conveyed its rejection in the order of April 9.

Subsequently, the Board ordered closure of the plant and disconnection of power supply. Electricity was stopped to the unit on May 24, the GO recalled.

Pointing out that under Art 48-A of the Constitution, the "State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country", the GO said the government under Sec 18(1) (b) of the Water Act, 1974, "in the larger public interest" has now endorsed the TNPCB closure direction to Vedanta while directing the Board to "seal the unit and close the plant permanently".

■ P4

JUSTICE FOR PEOPLE

Under Art 48-A of the Constitution, the "State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country", the GO said

THROUGHOUT THE PROTESTS, MANY TRANSGENDER PERSONS IN THOOTHUKUDI PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE:

From protecting people from police violence to contributing in whatever way they could. On 22 May, the transgender persons led the rally. "We have not been interacting too much with anybody since because we really fear for our lives. But this gives us hope that our efforts haven't gone in vain," said Reema.

3 The government had ordered the permanent closure of the Sterlite plant at Thoothukudi (also known as Tuticorin). The order came after 13 died and over a hundred were wounded in the months-long protest against the plant.

— K. PALANISWAMI, TN chief minister

3 Even if there were legal challenges in the closure of the plant, it will be faced and the government will take resolute steps to permanently close down the Vedanta group's copper unit in Thoothukudi

— O. PANNEERSELVAM, Dy. CM

Dy tahsildars had ordered police to open fire: Govt

M. ARULOLI | DC
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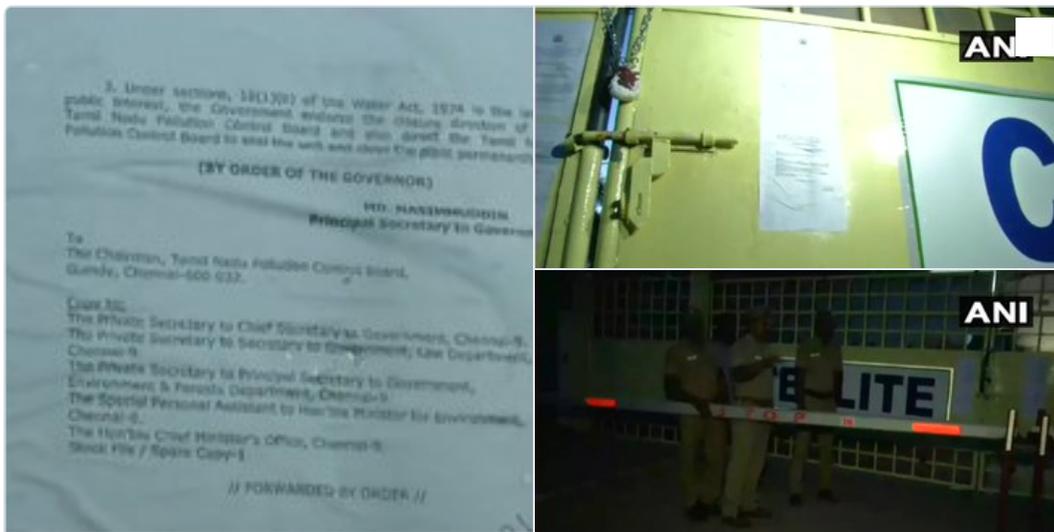
Tamil Nadu orders shut down of Sterlite copper plant

TIMESOFINDIA.COM | Updated: May 28, 2018, 19:01 IST



One of the gates of

CHENNAI: The Tamil Nadu government on Monday ordered permanent shut down of Sterlite copper unit in Tuticorin. Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami released the order against the Vedanta group plant on Monday evening, days after 13 deaths in police firing against anti-Sterlite protesters .



Visuals from outside [#Sterlite](#) plant, closure of the plant has been ordered following death of 13 people in police firing during anti-Sterlite protests in [#Thoothukudi](#)

6:57 PM - May 28, 2018

71 25 people are talking about this

Large-scale violence on May 22 against the Sterlite copper plant here and police firing led to the death of 12 persons and the next day saw one more youth succumbing to injuries sustained in police firing

"Today, the main demand of the people is that the copper plant should be permanently closed. In keeping with their demand, it is shut now. I would like to make it clear that Sterlite plant will be permanently shut," Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam said.

The "Amma's government," will do all things necessary to ensure the plant's closure, he told reporters after visiting those injured in the violence and police firing on May 22, at a state-run hospital here.

Describing the deaths of 13 people in the police firing as an "incident of grief which melted the hearts of everyone," Panneerselvam expressed his condolences to the kin of the dead and wished the injured a speedy recovery.



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Recalling the steps taken by the government for closing down the plant, he said way back in 2013, the copper plant was shut by late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa. However, Sterlite approached the National Green Tribunal and got orders for resuming operations and the government petition opposing this was still pending in the Supreme Court.

TOP COMMENT

good decision by the Government of Tamilnadu after taking 15 lives of their own state people.

Vinu A

Also, the state pollution control board did not renew its consent due to which the plant could not operate, he said.

TAMIL NADU

Cases against rioters transferred to CB-CID

STAFF REPORTER

MAY 30, 2018 00:00 IST

A Government Order to this effect was issued on Monday

The cases filed against protesters who were allegedly involved in rioting during the anti-Sterlite agitation in Thoothukudi on May 22 have been transferred to the CB-CID.

Superintendent of Police Murali Rambha told The Hindu that a little over 200 cases had been booked against those who created unrest during the protest. The government on Monday issued an order transferring these cases to the CB-CID, the SP added.

Cases were booked against the violators under Sections 147, 148, 188, 353, 323, 324, 436, 307 and 506 of the Indian Penal Code. Further, protesters were also booked under the TNPPDL Act and the Explosive Substances Act.

Sources in the Thoothukudi Government Medical College Hospital said that currently, 50 persons were being treated there. During the riot, as many as 108 persons were hurt in a lathicharge. Twenty-seven of the injured sustained gunshot wounds. A team of 20 doctors, including vascular surgeons, orthopaedic surgeons and cardiothoracic surgeons from Madurai, Thoothukudi and Kanniyakumari had conducted surgeries on the victims, sources added.

Post-mortem

Of the 13 who died in the police firing, post-mortem has been performed on seven bodies so far, following a judicial inquest. The bodies are at the mortuary and are yet to be handed over to the next of kin.

As regards the post-mortem on the remaining six, the consent of the relatives/legal heirs was awaited, officials said.

As for compensation, the government on Tuesday issued a cheque of Rs. 20 lakh to the family members of Selvasekaran, who was killed in the police

firing. While those who had suffered grievous injuries, including gunshot wounds, were initially provided Rs. 3 lakh as solatium, now, following a Government Order, they would get an additional Rs. 2 lakh each. Likewise, those who had suffered minor injuries would now be given Rs. 50,000 each, in addition to the Rs. 1 lakh announced earlier.

A little over 200 cases had been booked against those who created unrest during the protest
Murali Rambha
Superintendent of Police

'We protested for well-being of policemen, their children, too'



Sanjana Ganesh

SANJANA GANESH, MAY 30, 2018 00:00 IST

Victims of second day of police firing in Thoothukudi are anxious and unsure

It's a slow afternoon at Government Rajaji Hospital (GRH) in Madurai but the special ward, housing four patients who received gunshot wounds during the Sterlite protest in Thoothukudi, is abuzz. The victims who fell in the line of fire on May 23 — the second day when the police opened fire on the protesters — say they have mixed feelings about the closure of Sterlite Copper.

K. Sakthivel, who has been actively involved in the agitation since 2017, recounts the first day of the protest on May 22, when a sea of people came to the Collectorate holding placards, signboards, water and packets of biscuits.

“It was supposed to be a peaceful protest. We did not carry any arms.

Nobody expected fire and gunshots, and there was chaos immediately after the first few rounds of firing. On the 100th day of the protest, we came [to protest] for a cleaner, safer Thoothukudi. We came for the sons and daughters of policemen, too,” he said.

When the protests escalated on the second day, Mr. Sakthivel went to Anna Nagar to help other protesters. He and C. Kalimuthu, another victim recovering at the GRH, were in the same spot when the police opened fire on the protesters. Mr. Kalimuthu received the bullet on his thigh and Mr. Sakthivel was hit on his elbow.

Strangers came on motorbikes and rushed them to Thoothukudi Government Hospital. After realising that their wounds required more specialised treatment, they were shifted to Madurai.

Both victims stated that the entire issue would have been resolved if the government had intervened earlier on. “We are relieved that the plant has been closed and that State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited (SIPCOT) has cancelled the allotment of land for the proposed plant expansion. But at what cost?,” asks Mr. Kalimuthu. He adds that several innocent victims were caught in the chaos, too.

Terrifying ordeal

For 17-year-old Veerabhagu Sundar, who was heading to his father’s milk shop, the bullet on his thigh was the most terrifying ordeal. “I was heading to my father’s shop in Anna Nagar to check if it was all right. I did not venture close to the protesters. Out of nowhere, I heard gunshots and immediately felt a piercing pain. I am the only son to my parents, and I have four sisters. What is going to happen to my leg? I cannot bear to think about whether my life and the city will ever be normal again,” he says.

S. Chandra, whose son S. Rajalingam, was shot in the neck, is unsure about the future, too. Mr. Rajalingam, who worked as a load man, is one of the stable breadwinners in her house. She has borrowed Rs. 10,000 to come to Madurai for the treatment but is anxious about returning the money to her lender.

“It would be great if the government actively works towards giving us compensation for our misery. Without the money, we would have to beg and borrow,” she says. She thanks the several anonymous volunteers who admitted the fallen protesters to a hospital despite all odds. “We all have a piece of the protest in us now,” she says.

TAMIL NADU

Governor visits riot victims at hospital



STAFF REPORTER

MAY 30, 2018 00:00 IST

Enquires about the treatment being provided to them; assures all possible help to bereaved families

Governor Banwarilal Purohit on Tuesday visited the Thoothukudi Government Hospital to enquire about the treatment being provided to those who were injured in the police firing during an anti-Sterlite rally last week.

Mr. Purohit, who flew to the port town from Chennai, visited the family members of the injured and listened to the grievances of the public, flanked by a large posse of police and revenue officials. While interacting with the injured, Mr. Purohit enquired about the medical treatment being provided to them and appealed to the doctors to provide quality treatment and special attention to the victims for their speedy recovery.

He met the family of P. Selvasekar, 52, who was killed in the police firing, at their residence in Iruvappapuram near Sawyerpuram. He spent some time with

the bereaved family and gave an assurance that all possible assistance would be provided to Masaanam, the mother of the deceased, and his two sisters, Santha and Seetha.

Meets kin

Later, the Governor met the kin of two other victims — J. Antony Selvaraj, 42, of Annai Velankanni Nagar, and S. Maniraj, 34, of Damodaran Nagar, and consoled the grieving family members.

Additional Chief Secretary to the Governor R. Rajagopal, Additional Chief Secretary (Transport) P.W.C. Davidar, Thoothukudi Collector Sandeep Nanduri and Superintendent of Police Murali Rambha received the Governor at the airport.

The Governor also enquired with the Collector about the damage caused during the violence and the prevailing law and order situation in Thoothukudi. Later, he boarded a Chennai-bound flight at 3 p.m.

Corporation Commissioner Alby John Varghese, District Revenue Officer M. Veerappan, Thoothukudi Sub-Collector Prashanth and Thoothukudi Medical College dean Lalitha accompanied the Governor during his visit.

Geetha Jeevan rebuts charge



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, MAY 30, 2018 00:00 IST

DMK MLA Geetha Jeevan on Tuesday countered Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami's allegation that DMK cadre led by her had instigated violence during the anti-Sterlite protests in Thoothukudi last week.

Stating that the residents had been protesting peacefully against Sterlite, she said that on the 100th day of the protest, the people had planned to take out a rally. Over 500 party cadre led by her participated in the rally but were arrested by the police immediately and detained in a marriage hall. Against this backdrop, the CM was belittling the local people who had participated in the protest, she said. The DMK was being blamed only out of political compulsion, she added.

Police warned of reprisal

MAY 30, 2018 00:00 IST

The intelligence wing has warned the Thoothukudi Superintendent of Police that some fishermen had procured explosives to attack policemen and their establishments to avenge the deaths of 13 anti-Sterlite protesters on May 22 and 23, sources said. The alert called for measures to protect police quarters, the camp office of the Superintendent of Police, the marriage halls where policemen from other districts were accommodated. page 8

Report in two weeks

“The NHRC team would leave forthwith and examine all concerned, including the family members of the victims and independent witnesses as it deems appropriate and submit a report to the Commission within two weeks,” the NHRC said in a statement.

The NHRC said it gave the order after considering a representation made by a petitioner, A. Rajarajan, before the Delhi High Court, seeking an independent investigation by the Commission.

The NHRC had also taken suo motu cognisance of media reports on the firing, and issued notice to the Tamil Nadu police and the government on May 23, seeking reports within two weeks.

Tamil Nadu to take back land allotted to Sterlite

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI / NEW DELHI, MAY 30, 2018 00:00 IST

SIPCOT order cites pollution concerns

A day after the Sterlite Copper smelting plant in Thoothukudi was sealed, the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited (SIPCOT) decided to take back 342.22 acres of land allotted to the Vedanta group in Thoothukudi for expansion.

In its order on Tuesday, the SIPCOT managing director said a series of agitations had been carried out against the expansion of the copper smelter plant (Phase II) by Vedanta in the SIPCOT industrial complex, “expressing concerns” about the pollution caused by the existing smelter plant. “The people of the area have also been raising concern about their health on account of the operations of the plant,” the order said.

As the allotment of land for the proposed expansion had been made by SIPCOT, “in larger public interest,” it is being cancelled, the order said. “The land price collected for the said land allotment will be refunded as per norms of SIPCOT,” the order added.

Meanwhile, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Tuesday said it would send a team of officers to investigate the May 22 police firing on protesters in Thoothukudi, which resulted in the death of 13 persons.

The NHRC said it had asked its Director-General (Investigation) to send a team, headed by an officer of the rank of Senior Superintendent of Police, along with three officers of the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police of the Investigation Division to visit the spot to conduct an inquiry.

EPS TEARS INTO DMK'S FIRING CHARGE

Chief Minister Palaniswami says that the spurt in agitations of the Opposition party was an attempt to cover up its mistakes that led to the May 22 incident



Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami addressing the Assembly on Tuesday | EXPRESS

'ISSUES STARTED DURING DMK REGIME'

The chief minister pointed out in the Assembly that the car of a DMK functionary who followed his leader MK Stalin when he visited Thoothukudi was torched. This incident showed where their anger was. During the violent incidents, 58 protesters and 72 police personnel suffered injuries. Tracing the origin of the issue, he said Public Interest Litigations against the Sterlite plant were filed between 1996 and 1999 when DMK was in power seeking its closure. However, the then DMK government stood by Sterlite when arguing before the Madras High Court. "Now, the DMK leaders are staging a drama as if they are against the Sterlite plant," he added. He asked why the DMK governments failed to close down Sterlite during their past two terms.

KARUNANIDHI'S REMARK RECALLED

Edappadi K Palaniswami recalled a remark made by Karunanidhi in the Assembly on March 12, 1969 about a police firing that "As far as police firing is concerned, only 'shoot to kill' policy is being practised. Firing is ordered after using teargas shells and lathi charge. If loss of lives take place at that time, police cannot be held as responsible for that." Karunanidhi had, on May 25, 1998 said the police firing had become unavoidable in the state.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

TEARING into past regimes of DMK and Congress in the State and Centre over the Sterlite issue in giving environmental and other clearances to the plant at Thoothukudi and later allocation of lands for expanding the unit, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami on Tuesday charged that the DMK was now staging a drama in the matter just to cover up its mistakes in the past. He promised the State Assembly that action would be taken against those who committed wrong in Thoothukudi.

In his 75-minute reply on Sterlite issue raised by members in the House, he also answered the demand for CBI inquiry or inquiry by a sitting judge of Madras High Court etc., quoting profusely how such inquiry commissions over loss of lives in police firing had been headed only by retired judges of high court and even by retired district judges and revenue divisional officers.

Referring to the charge that inquiry commission ordered into police firing in Thoothukudi was just an eyewash, the Chief Minister asked whether the inquiry

commissions formed during the previous DMK regimes were also done as just eyewash.

On the charge that he had failed to visit Thoothukudi so far, Palaniswami pointed out that former Chief Minister M Karunanidhi never visited any place where police firing took place. Since he was constantly monitoring the situation, he did not go but Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam and State ministers visited Thoothukudi and met the affected people.

Stating that he was not justifying the police firing in Thoothukudi, the chief minister said action would be taken against those committed wrong on May 22. He also explained in detail by showing a map in which how people from 24 places converged at one place and at five places police prevented the movement of the crowd by erecting barricades.

The police had attempted to persuade the people to disperse, using less force by way of lathi charge and teargas shells. Despite all these attempts, the protestors trespassed into the ecotone and Sterlite plant and torched vehicles there. Only when the situation became uncontrollable, the police resorted to firing. He also showed many photographs to prove that the

processionists turned violent.

"Leaders of political parties were protesting for 99 days. Indeed, they have been protesting for 22 long years and now they protested because this government would resolve the issue," he said.

Recalling that the district Collector had held 14 rounds of talks with the agitators on many occasions, he said on May 20, Thoothukudi Sub Collector held talks with the protesters and they agreed to stage a demonstration in a peaceful manner near the railway station. But, a section of protesters did not agree to this and announced they would lay siege to the collectorate as planned. So, as a precaution, 2,000 police personnel were deployed to maintain law and order. Apart from the protesters, people from some outfits also took part in the agitation on May 22 and they, with a view to creating a crisis for the government, laid siege to the collectorate despite prohibitory orders.

The chief minister also charged that despite prohibitory orders in force under Section 144 CrPc on May 22, DMK MLA Geetha Jeevan led around 200 persons in a procession and only after that violent incidents took place.

DMK MLAS TO HOLD MOCK ASSEMBLY

Chennai: MLAs belonging to the chief opposition party, DMK, who had announced boycott of the current session of the Assembly over the Thoothukudi police firing incident, will hold a mock Assembly today (Wednesday) in the premises of the office, Anna Arivalayam, at Teynampet here, according to party Whip R Sakkarapani. He said it is to protest against Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami's failure to mention the word firing in Thoothukudi and expunging a particular term used by the Leader of Opposition MK Stalin in the House during a debate on the issue on Tuesday. It may be noted that DMK legislators held a mock sitting of the House on the Assembly premises in August 2016 to protest against their en masse suspension.

ENS

ORDER ON CLOSURE VALID, SAYS CM

Chennai: Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami on Tuesday denied the charge of political parties, including DMK, that the G.O issued by the State government for closing down Sterlite plant at Thoothukudi permanently was only an eyewash and it would not stand the test of law. He pointed out that ahead of issuing the G.O, detailed discussions were held with legal experts. Replying to a call attention motion on Sterlite issue in the Assembly, he said "As per section 18 (1) B of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, the G.O would become invalid only if the State PCB issued a direction to the Sterlite plant contrary to the CPCB's orders.

ENS

FOREST MINISTER HEAPS PRAISE ON EPS

Chennai: A senior minister (Forests) and veteran AIADMK leader Dindigul C Sreenivasan heaped praise on Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami on Tuesday. Beginning his reply to the debate on the demand for grants for forest department, he said 'Edappadiyar' is giving shape to the ambitions of Amma (Jayalithaa) and he took care in arranging the MGR centenary functions in an astonishing manner. When the party underwent a phase of agony and uncertainty with the name and symbol frozen, a 'new history' was scripted in the form of 'Edappadiyar', he said. Sreenivasan, usually known for keeping a low profile in the House, looked flamboyant in showering encomium on the Chief Minister who had earlier made a strenuous statement on the Thoothukudi police firing. The minister said Palaniswami was instrumental in finding a solution to the 125-year-old Cauvery water sharing dispute.

ENS

Eco-restoration in Pallikaranai to continue for four years

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

REAFFIRMING the State government's resolve to protect the Pallikaranai marshland, Forest minister Dindigul C Sreenivasan informed the Assembly on Tuesday that eco-restoration activities in the marshland would continue for four years.

Conservation Authority of Pallikaranai Marshland has been constituted to monitor all the activities and an area of 690.65 hectare is under the control of the forest department, according to the policy note for 2018-19 tabled in the House.

"Restoration activities like habitat improvement, protection, research, monitoring, publicity and awareness have been undertaken. The activities will continue from 2018-19 to 2022-23 at a cost of ₹165.68 crore under the national adaptation fund for climate change," it said.

It may be recalled there was a huge outcry over encroachment and dumping of waste in the 'unique fresh water swamp' located within the Chennai Metropolitan area.

As per the policy note, the total wetland area in Tamil Nadu is about 9,02,524 hectares comprising 6.92 per cent of the geographical area of the State. As many as 15 wetlands were notified as wildlife sanctuaries under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

A scheme for wetland conservation and development was implemented during 2017-18 with an outlay of ₹2.30 crore and it would continue during the current year with funds to the tune of ₹3.11 crore.





M K Stalin leading DMK members in a protest against in Chennai on Tuesday | D SAMPATHKUMAR

DMK to boycott House session till Sterlite is permanently closed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

DMK working president MK Stalin on Tuesday announced that his party would boycott the proceedings of the ongoing Assembly session until the State government takes a firm step to close down the Sterlite plant permanently.

He said this while speaking on a call attention motion on this issue and led his party colleagues in a walk out. They did not return to the House to take part in the demands for grants for Forests and Information Technology Departments held later.

Reiterating that the inquiry commission into the police firing in Thoothukudi was an eyewash, Stalin said the Sterlite plant could be closed down permanently only by taking a policy decision by convening the State cabinet meeting. So, the G.O issued in this regard would not be useful. He said the Chief Minister should step down for failing to hold talks with the protesters in time and for the police firing.

TTV Dhinakaran, RK Nagar MLA said a

CB CID inquiry into the police firing would not suffice and a CBI probe should be ordered. The inquiry commission should be headed by a sitting judge of Madras HC under the supervision of Chief Justice.

Speaker P Dhanapal expunged a couple of words used by Dhinakaran during his speech. Intervening, Minister for Electricity, P Thangamani charged that Dhinakaran's speech was aimed at inciting protests at Thoothukudi which was limping back to normalcy.

Congress floor leader K R Ramasamy asked who had ordered the police firing and the government should come out with a categorical answer. Later, he led his colleagues in a walk out stating that sufficient opportunity was not given to them to counter the charges levelled by Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami.

SP Shanmuganathan (AIADMK), representing Srivaikuntam constituency in Thoothukudi district, expressed satisfaction over the steps taken by the government to bring back normalcy in Thoothukudi.



Careful legal battle will ensure permanent closure of Sterlite: Vaiko

S KUMARESAN @Chennai

THE State government's job is not done just by passing an order to close down Sterlite's copper plant at Thoothukudi, says Vaiko, MDMK general secretary. Only by carefully fighting a legal battle against the company it will be ensured that the plant is not reopened, he told *Express* in freewheeling chat on the issue.

The recent phase of the anti-Sterlite protest could be mostly a people-led one. But, Vaiko was one of the early political leaders to have started the protests against Sterlite plant and led a prolonged legal battle. Excerpts from his interview to *Express*:

Is it the first victory for the people against Sterlite?

No, before 1994, the Sterlite copper smelting plant valued about ₹300 crore was razed down by the people of Maharashtra even though they got the licence from the then Sharad Pawar-led Maharashtra government. Following the incident, Maharashtra government cancelled their licence. But, Sterlite didn't go to court to get back the government licence as they realised that the people of Maharashtra will not allow them to operate the plant. That's the victory of the Maharashtra people as they were fully aware about the impact of the plant. Likewise, people of Thoothukudi and Tamil Nadu are now aware of the plant's hazardous impact.

How was your experience of legal battle against Sterlite?

The plant had visibly violated two mandatory rules. Firstly the plant should be established 25 km away from the sea shore as various protected marine creatures and coral reefs exist in the area. Secondly, a green belt should be established in the premises of the plant at a width of 250 metres to protect the environment. But, the plant has been established at 15 km from the shore and the green belt had been set up for only a width of 25 metres. By these two visible violations and other environmental pollution, we got the closure order against the Sterlite in 2013. But, even though the Supreme Court accepted our argument, they permitted to operate the plant to fulfill the copper need of the country as the Sterlite made several intensive efforts to get a favourable order.



MDMK general secretary Vaiko at his residence in Anna Nagar on Tuesday | ASHWIN PRASATH

Did the State government support you when you were engaged in the legal battle?

Till 2012, December, the Tamil Nadu government pro-actively supported the operation of the Sterlite. But, they changed their tone after March, 29, 2013 when hundreds of Thoothukudi residents suffered suffocation and fainted due to leakage of toxic gas from Sterlite. Following which, the State government filed a writ petition against Sterlite, after I filed a petition. Now, the State government should carefully pursue the legal battle against the plant as the organisation will go to any extent to resume operation.

What would be the reaction of Thoothukudi people if they fail in legal battle?

The people of Thoothukudi will converge and dismantle the plant like how Maharashtra people did against the plant during the early 90s if the court fail to stop the operation of the plant permanently. This is what many people told me when I visited the victims on 22nd, when the police firing occurred, and 23rd morning. They said that they won't be thwarted by the shooting. The people of Thoothukudi are ready to brave the bullets. That's why I said that the plant would be dismantled by the people.

What do you think about concerns raised by industrialists over the shutting of the plant?

They are speaking about the sustainable development. We also agree with the concept of sustainable development. But, we differ with them on the question of at what cost? We must never agree to destroy our natural resources and livelihood in the name of development.



DMK to boycott House session till Sterlite is permanently closed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Chennai

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M K Stalin



Pleas in HC seek probe by sitting judge

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Chennai

THREE PIL petitions were filed in the Madras High Court on Tuesday in connection with the tragic incidents in Thoothukudi on May 22, 23 and 24.

Social activist 'Traffic' K R Ramaswamy requested the court to constitute a high-level monitoring committee and a special investigation team consisting of a

sitting or a retired judge of the Supreme Court, a top level officer from CBI and director of the State forensic department aided by ballistic and cyber crime experts to take urgent measures to curtail trouble/violence.

Another petition was filed by Silambarasan, a journalist, seeking a directive to suspend Sekar, Deputy Tahsildar (Elections), who had allegedly ordered firing on anti-Sterlite protestors on

May 22, and also to constitute an independent judicial committee headed by a sitting judge of the High Court.

In a petition, S Rajanikanth, an advocate and also president of the Makkal Arasu Katchi, sought the suspension of police officers who had indulged in violent activities and killed innocent people and to pay a compensation of ₹five crore to each to the families of the victims.



CB-CID probe ordered into anti-Sterlite protest firing

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 29

A week after 13 persons were killed in police firing during the anti-Sterlite protest, DGP T.K. Rajendiran ordered a CB-CID probe into the case.

The order was issued on Monday night, two days after the DGP visited riot-hit Thoothukudi and consoled the public, affected by police excess. Following the order, the CB-CID would probe into cases registered by district police.

Meanwhile, it is learnt that the Thoothukudi Sipcot police have registered

cases against 10,000 persons, while Thenbagam police and Vadabagam police registered cases against 500 persons.

Apart from ordering CB-CID probe, the state police head also appointed CB-CID SP Praveen Kumar as the investigating officer.

Praveen Kumar along with 15 inspectors visited Thootukudi on Tuesday and initiated the investigation. Meanwhile, the local police have handed over the files regarding the cases to CB-CID.

The CB-CID probe has been ordered in spite of the wider demand for CBI probe by political parties and protesters.

■ In Assembly, EPS says inquiry panel seized of the matter

Sterlite: CM blames DMK for inciting violence

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 29

The violence and police firing in Thoothukudi that claimed 13 lives rocked the Tamil Nadu assembly on Tuesday with Chief Minister K Palaniswami blaming the DMK, and “some anti-social elements” for the violence and maintaining that the subsequent police action was “unavoidable”. He also asserted that stern action would be taken if the Commission of Inquiry finds that anyone mis-handled that situation.

Calling the Government Order for closure of the Sterlite copper plant an ‘eyewash’ and ‘drama’, DMK members staged a walkout, with their leader M.K. Stalin saying the party would boycott the House proceedings “until the Chief Minister accepts moral responsibility and resigns, and Sterlite is permanently shut.”

Members of DMK’s ally Congress, wearing black badges, sat through the CM’s speech that stretched for over an hour, before walking out saying they did not get the answer they expected from the government.

The Congress legislature party leader K R Ramasamy pointedly asked if the ‘incidents’ were “right or wrong” and also demanded transfer of the probe into the violence-firing to the CBI.

To this, CM said a Commission of Inquiry, headed by Justice Aruna Jagadeesan, has been set up and based on its findings, “appropriate action will be taken if anyone is found to have committed wrongs.” Expressing grief over the deaths, he wondered how a comment like right or wrong can be made when an inquiry panel was seized of the matter. ■ P4



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— CM Edappadi K. Palaniswami

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● **Rajini to visit Thoothukudi today**

Govt cancels land allocation for copper smelter expansion

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 29

A day after the TN government ordered permanent closure of Sterlite plant in Thoothukudi, the Tamil Nadu Industries Promotion Corporation (SIPCOT) cancelled 342.22 acres land allocated for the expansion of plant in the area. The government order (GO)

also stated that the land price collected would be refunded.

“As the allotment of land for the proposed expansion has been made by SIPCOT, in larger public interest, the land allotment made by SIPCOT for proposed expansion of copper smelter plant (Phase-2) by Vedanta Ltd is hereby cancelled,” SIPCOT said in its

communication to the Vedanta group. The land price collected for the said land allotment will be refunded as per the norms of SIPCOT, it further said.

“The cancellation of allotment of 342.22 acres of land has been made in larger public interest and this has been communicated to the company,” an official release said. ■ P4

DMK is enacting drama, says Palaniswami

FROM P1

Earlier, tabling a report on the Thoothukudi incidents, he said measures like tear gas and baton charge were used against those who indulged in violence. "In unavoidable circumstances, police personnel were forced to take action," he said in an apparent reference to the police firings. He urged the people of Thoothukudi not to succumb to instigations by anyone and cooperate for the continuation of peace.

Soon after question hour, Leader of the Opposition M K Stalin, attired in black, targeted the government for issuing a Government Order (GO) for closure of Vedanta group's copper plant, rather than convening the Cabinet and taking a policy decision in this regard. The GO, he said, was an "eyewash and drama," tantamount to signalling the Sterlite management to approach the court, and was much like what happened in 2013, he said.

Palaniswami hit back

at Stalin, saying the protest against the unit had been going on for 22 years and it was DMK which was enacting a 'drama' on the issue.

He demanded to know why it was not closed when DMK was in power for 10 years (1996-2001 and 2006-11). Also, land allocation for Sterlite expansion was made only during the DMK regime, he said.

"DMK is trying to portray as if the (AIADMK) government has done something wrong on the issue. However, the people know who is enacting a drama," he said.

Palaniswami said the G.O for closure of Sterlite was issued only after consulting legal experts.

He said though the anti-Sterlite protest group agreed for a peaceful demonstration on May 22, some political parties and outfits joined it 'all of a sudden' to push the government to a corner and created a law and order problem. He named DMK legislator Geetha Jeevan as the one who had led a crowd of about 200 party mem-

bers in a march towards the collectorate.

"Some infiltrated the demonstration (rally) and indulged in violence by hurling stones at the police, chased and assaulted them, damaged the collectorate building and set on fire government and private vehicles," he said and later showed photographs to prove it.

He said vehicles parked in the residential quarters of Sterlite were set on fire. Similarly Thoothukudi South Police State and a district industries office were damaged. All efforts were made by police to halt the arsonists and rein in violence to safeguard the lives of public and guard property who used measures like tear-gas and baton-charge, CM said.

Stalin said the firing would not have occurred had adequate police personnel been deployed. Palaniswami's remark (made days ago) that anti-socials had infiltrated the rally led to depiction of the innocent public as anti-socials, he alleged.

Anti-Sterlite protesters preparing to retaliate, alerts intel report

Chennai: Alerting the state police of possible imminent attacks on the police establishments in the Thoothukudi district, the Special Branch-CID had sent an intelligence report to offices of Thoothukudi SP and Tirunelveli DIG. The report, that contains names of a few politicians, protest organisers, has been said to be sent on May 25. "Some extremist protesters are planning to bring men from neighbouring Tirunelveli district by boat to the riot-hit Thoothukudi and retaliate heavily by attacking police quarters, SP office, collector's camp office and a few police stations," according to the intelligence report. However, the veracity of the report has been put into question, as the said report, leaked on Tuesday did not contain any signature and official seal. Following the intelligence input, police have intensified the security at Fathima Nagar, Thirespuram, Thermal Nagar, Muthiahpuram, Thalamuthu Nagar, Mottai Gopuram and other areas identified as sensitive.



Governor Banwarilal Purohit, on Tuesday visited the families of those killed in police firing and met the injured at the government hospital at Thoothukudi. —DC

Blame game not good, remarks police officer

M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 29

The Chief Minister Mr. Edappadi K Palaniswami, blaming the DMK responsible for the violence at the May 22 anti-Sterlite rally will only help the fringe groups like the Makkal Adhigaram, Naam Tamilar Katchi and Puratchikara Ilaigar Munnani, whose cadres hijacked the peace protest to make it violent, resulting in the loss of 13 lives.

“This kind of blame game for petty political reasons would never help the administration find out the real culprits behind the riot,” regretted a police officer in Thoothukudi district. He too pointed that an hour before the bigger rally started from the Lady of our Snows church on the beach road, around 200 DMK men led by Thoothukudi MLA P Geetha Jeevan were picked up by the police for going in a procession that was

● **This kind of blame game for petty political reasons would never help the administration find out the real culprits behind the riot said a police officer. The DMK held the procession just to register their protest and agreed to police order as has been decided earlier, he added**

started from Thoothukudi new bus stand.

“The DMK held the procession just to register their protest and agreed to police order as has been decided earlier,” said the police officer, who, however, added that the real culprits behind the violence were a very few handful of men, who included some lawyers

owing allegiance to fringe organisation like the Makkal Adhigaram and Puratchikara Ilaigar Munnani.

“Two of the cadres of these outfits too were killed in police firing,” pointed out the police officer, adding that examining the photos, video clippings and CCTV footage have revealed the presence of outsiders.

“Many of these men who started stone pelting and attacking the police were clad in black,” said the police officer, who too had stated that the youths, who ravaged the district collector’s office premises had sported handkerchiefs to hide their identity.

The police officer further warned that unless these fringe elements were rightly identified and nipped in the bud, this industrial hub might have to face many more such violence against orderly industrial development in the region.

■ Demands white paper on Thoothukudi violence

DMK CALLS FOR CM'S RESIGNATION

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 29

Protesting against the police firing that resulted in the death of 13 persons during the anti-Sterlite protests in Thoothukudi last week, DMK members led by their working president M. K.

Stalin, clad in black shirts, staged a walkout from the Assembly on the opening day of the Budget session, demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami over anti-Sterlite protests. Stalin also sought a white paper on the incidents leading to police action.

Monday's GO on closing Sterlite plant, Stalin claimed was a mere "eye-wash" and it tantamounts to "signaling" the Sterlite management to approach the court for permission to operate the unit again. "If the government is serious on this issue, then it would have convened the Cabinet and took a policy decision and issued the order. Only then it will be valid in any court," the DMK leader claimed.

Speaking to reporters outside the Assembly on Tuesday, he said when he raised the issue on police firing in Thoothukudi, in the Assembly, the CM objected to his reference to the deaths as "murder" and the Speaker expunged it. "If we say inefficient government, they expunge. They have accounted for 13 deaths.

Murder cases should be registered against the police DGP, district SP, Tirunelveli DIG, Madurai IG, and these officials should be suspended and disciplinary action initiated against them. Above all, owning moral responsibility the CM should resign," Mr. Stalin who staged a walk out along with his DMK legislators, insisted.

The Tamil Nadu Assembly was reconvened on Tuesday after it was adjourned on March 22, following the presentation of the Budget.

He informed that his DMK would not participate in the Assembly proceedings till the Cabinet passed the orders. To a question, he replied that Mr. Palaniswami had in his report tabled in the Assembly and even while talking to media, refrained



DMK members, all clad in black, led by their working president M. K. Stalin tramped out of the Assembly on Tuesday after staging a walkout demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami.

—DC

CHAOS ENSUES AS OPPN BOYCOTTS SESSION

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 29

The violence and police firing in the southern coastal town of Thoothukudi resulting in the death of 13 persons, rocked the Assembly on Tuesday with the Opposition DMK demanding an adjournment to discuss the issue.

However, Speaker P. Dhanapal, who managed to avert a total bedlam in the Assembly, dissuaded the adjournment motion, but took up a special call attention motion moved by three legislators Srivaikundam (in Thoothukudi district) legislator S. P. Shanmuganathan (AIADMK), Nagapattinam MLA Thamim-un Ansari and R. K. Nagar MLA and AMMK leader T. T. V. Dhinakaran, on same issue. He convinced the DMK to speak on the subject and assured that he would give them an opportunity to raise the subject later.

Immediately after the question hour, leader of the Opposition DMK M. K. Stalin, who came to the Assembly, clad in black shirt, flayed the govern-

ment for issuing an order for shutting Vedanta group's copper plant in Thoothukudi, and remarked, "issuing a GO (on Monday) and sealing the factory, is an eye wash and a drama. Through this, you have signalled the Sterlite management to approach the court for reopening the plant."

The move was similar to what happened in 2013 over the issue, he added. Blaming the state government for not holding talks with the protesters, the DMK working president said his party would boycott the rest of the session till the Chief Minister tendered his resignation and the plant was "permanently closed." He led his party colleagues in staging a walkout. The DMK men who were all clad in black shirts and women members in black sarees, tramped out of the House shouting slogans seeking the resignation of the Chief Minister.

Congress also sought the resignation of the CM. The Congress members, wearing black badges, sat through Chief Minister

Edappadi K. Palaniswami's reply for an hour and walked out, saying they did not get the answer they expected from the government. After the CM's address, Congress Legislature party leader K. R. Ramasamy asked if the "incidents," an apparent reference to the police firing and deaths, were "right or wrong" and added they expected an answer for it. He said the probe into the incidents should be done properly or must be transferred to the CBI. Both DMK and its ally Congress demanded withdrawal of all cases and release of those arrested.

Earlier, moving the motion, Srivaikundam legislator S. P. Shanmuganathan hailed the TN government for ordering the permanent closure of Sterlite plant and said the Thoothukudi residents celebrated it by firing crackers. "Peace is regaining due to government's efforts," he added.

Anticipating trouble, the police had deployed over 1,000 personnel on the stretch from War Memorial to RBI office.

from referring to 'police firing' incident that had caused the deaths. "The CM's report on the violence is a farce and even the one-person enquiry commission is an eye-wash," Mr. Stalin added.

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The CM's report on the violence is a farce and even the one-person enquiry commission is an eye-wash

—M.K STALIN

CM blames DMK for giving sanctions to Sterlite when they were in power

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 29

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami squarely laid the blame for the Sterlite issue and Thoothukudi violence at the doors of the DMK, saying that all vital sanctions for the copper plant were issued during the DMK administration and the May 22 violence was caused by the members of that party 'misleading' peaceful protesters on that day.

He said protesters in Thoothukudi had stoned DMK working president M. K. Stalin's car when he visited the town (on May 23).

This only showed that

there is ample proof that they were angry with the DMK and holding their party responsible for the Sterlite woes, he told the Assembly on Tuesday.

On May 23, stones were also hurled at vehicles which followed Stalin's car in Thoothukudi and Vilathikulam union secretary of the party Marimuthu was asked to get down from his car and it was set ablaze, the Chief Minister said. "So the protestors did not welcome them. From this it should be understood against whom the people were angry," he said and added a case has been registered on such violence.

Mr. Palaniswami said DMK leader Stalin enacted

a 'farical drama,' seeking Sterlite's closure, and said the DMK had allocated 100 acres land for Sterlite's expansion in 2008 during the tenure of M. Karunanidhi, as chief minister, holding the industries portfolio, too.

The DMK had granted permission for expansions on four occasions in 2004, 2007, 2008 and 2009 and the successive environment ministers: Pongalur N. Palanisamy, N. K. K. Periasamy and Moideen Khan besides DMK's former union minister A. Raja gave the clearance. That party had also filed an affidavit in favour of Sterlite before the high court, he added.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Fishers continue protest against Tuticorin killings

TNN | May 29, 2018, 12.24 AM IST



MADURAI: Country boat fishermen in Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari refrained from going fishing for the seventh consecutive day on Monday in protest against the anti-Sterlite protest shooting in which 13 people were killed.

The fishermen have been protesting the killing of the people who took part in a procession in Tuticorin on May 22, demanding the closure of the Sterlite Copper plant which they said was polluting the environment and causing health issues.

Fishermen from Periyathalai, Kootapuli, Kootappanai, Uvari, Idinthakarai, Thomaiyapuram and Perumpathu villages have been protesting and more than 1,000 boats did not venture into the sea.

In Uvari, more than 120 country boats were kept tethered and the fishermen said that they would go to sea only after the bodies of all the 13 victims are laid to rest.

On Monday, about 1,000 fishermen along with their families staged a protest by entering the sea with black flags in their hands in Kurumbanai near Colachel in Kanyakumari district.

They raised slogans against the Tamil Nadu government and justice for the people of the region.

In Periyakadu and Rajakkamangalam villages, a candlelight procession was held by the fishing community to pay homage to the 13 victims.

TAMIL NADU

HC adjourns hearing on Thoothukudi firing

STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, MAY 31, 2018 00:00 IST

Petitioners seek judicial probe

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Wednesday adjourned till June 1 the hearing on a batch of petitions seeking a judicial probe into the Thoothukudi police firing that left 13 people dead.

A division bench of Justices M.V. Muralidaran and T. Krishnavalli adjourned the petitions for further hearing. The petitioners sought a judicial probe into the police firing on the anti-Sterlite protesters. The petitioners claimed that as per the Police Standing Orders, the police should use tear gas, water jets and lathi charge to disperse a mob before opening fire. Firing should be an option only if the other means failed, they said.

Even when the police opened fire, firing should be selective and controlled. The mob should be warned and protester could be shot only below waist. The police must stop firing once the mob dispersed, the petitioners said.

However, this was not the case in Thoothukudi. The police purposefully aimed at the agitators and gunned them down. This was a brutal attack on the innocent protesters, the petitioners claimed. Retired Supreme Court judges should probe the case to bring out the truth, they said.

TAMIL NADU

HC orders re-postmortem



Mohamed Imranullah S.

CHENNAI, MAY 31, 2018 00:00 IST

Wants State to constitute team comprising three forensic experts

The Madras High Court on Wednesday ordered a fresh post-mortem on the bodies of seven out of the 13 people who died in the police firing last week during the violent protests demanding closure of the Sterlite plant in Thoothukudi.

Justices S. Baskaran and RMT. Teekaa Raman ordered the constitution of a team of three forensic experts, including one from either the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences or the Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research in Puducherry or the Government Medical College at Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala.

Making it clear that experts from any one of the three institutions could be made part of the three-member team depending upon their availability, the judges said that it should conduct fresh post-mortem in the presence of the same judicial magistrates who were present at the time of the first post-mortem and listed out the features to be observed.

The court ordered re-post-mortem of only seven bodies because Advocate General Vijay Narayan had earlier informed it that the government officials had so far conducted post-mortem only on seven bodies since the family members of six other persons, who had also died in the firing, were not cooperating in the conduct of the post-mortem.

Though the judges, while pronouncing their orders at 8.40 p.m., directed the government to go ahead and conduct post-mortem of the remaining six bodies too through the three-member expert team, they kept the direction in abeyance at about 9 p.m. after advocate R. Sankarasubbu, representing a group of three public interest litigants, objected to it.

‘Preserve six bodies’

Mr. Sankarasubbu contended that the family members of the six individuals who had died should be given an opportunity to convince the court to include a medical expert of their choice in the post-mortem team and till then, the bodies should be ordered to be preserved intact. Accepting his plea, the judges directed the government to preserve those bodies till June 6.

However, in respect of the seven bodies, the Bench said that they could be handed over to the family members of the deceased after the conclusion of the fresh postmortem. Since the government apprehended law and order problem while handing over the bodies, the court ordered that no one but for victims’ relatives should be allowed in the government hospital.

The last rites were conducted without any disturbance to peace and tranquillity, the court said.

TODAY'S PAPER

Continuous protests will turn T.N. into a graveyard: Rajini



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI/THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 31, 2018 00:00 IST

Actor's comments stir a hornet's nest; BJP endorses his stand

After visiting the victims of police firing in Thoothukudi on Wednesday, actor and Rajini Makkal Mandram founder Rajinikanth set off a political storm with his comments on protests and the role of the police, the State government and the opposition parties, among others.

“If there are going to be protests for every issue, Tamil Nadu will turn into a graveyard,” he said in an angry voice and walked away from an interaction with journalists at the Chennai airport, seemingly upset over the repeated questioning by a journalist on his position defending the police. “Anti-social elements had infiltrated the protests and created trouble. The people who

participated in the protests, including the fishermen, are innocent,” he said.

“Same thing happened on the final day of the jallikattu protests (last year). The whole trouble started when anti-social elements started attacking the police. The problems started then. I will never accept policemen in uniform being attacked,” Mr. Rajinikanth said. Asked how he knew about this [infiltration of anti-social elements], the actor, who has declared his intentions to join politics, said “I know.” He urged the police to quickly identify the anti-social elements.

His remarks drew varied reactions from political leaders. While Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi leader Thol Thirumavalavan argued that but for the protests the State would have turned into a graveyard, BJP leader Tamilisai Soundararajan endorsed his views.

Sri Lankans protest against police firing

Meera Srinivasan

COLOMBO, MAY 31, 2018 00:00 IST

Submit petition to Indian High Commission

Sri Lankan trade unionists and human rights activists on Wednesday protested outside the Indian High Commission here, demanding justice for victims of the recent police firing in Thoothukudi.

They held posters with solidarity messages, some likening the Thoothukudi incident to a similar shooting incident in Sri Lanka in 2013, when the Army opened fire at the residents of Rathupaswala, about 40 km north-east of Colombo, as they protested against drinking water contamination caused by a nearby factory.

“We are demanding justice for the 13 persons killed in Thoothukudi. We would like to tell the people there that many of us here — Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims — stand in solidarity with their struggle, as we too have experienced similar attacks,” said M. Mayuran of the Mass Movement for Social Justice.

The Thoothukudi incident found a strong resonance in Sri Lanka, because the government “privileged the interest of private companies and their profits over people’s lives,” according to Sandun Thudugala, Executive Director of the Colombo-based Law and Society Trust. “Farmers and working people hardly figure in our governments’ economic policies. They are just discarded,” he said.”

Organisations involved in ongoing struggles around land rights, environment, fisheries, fair wages and working conditions in Sri Lanka participated in the protest. In a petition handed over to the Indian High Commission, protesters noted: “Justice begins with the banning of Sterlite, but it does not end there.”

Anti-Sterlite youth to Rajinikanth: 'Who are you?'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 31, 2018 00:00 IST

He has posed this question to leaders visiting the riot-hit

Politics can be quite a leveller. As a film star, Rajinikanth is the object of universal adulation in Tamil Nadu. People throng to catch a glimpse of him if he makes an appearance. They fight to take selfies with him. But when the same Rajinikanth visited riot victims at Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital (TMCH) as a politician, a young riot victim undergoing treatment in the hospital's 5th floor asked him: "Who are you?" It's a question that Mr. Santhosh asks visiting VIPs to show his and the people's anger at politicians.

Top trend on Twitter

It is not known if the spiritually inclined Rajini was led to a state of ecstatic bliss by the existential dimensions of the question. In the mundane Twitterati world, however, it was certainly a high point. The Tamil hashtag #NaandhaanpaRajinikanth (I am only Rajinikanth) remained on top of the Twitter trends for several hours.

The youth, K. Santhosh Raj, 21, a B.Com graduate from Pandaarampatti near here formed the All College Students' Federation that played an active role in the anti-Sterlite agitation ever since it started at A. Kumareddiyarpuram. When he was marching towards the District Collectorate on May 22, Mr. Santosh came under attack and suffered a bleeding head injury and multiple blows from the lathi charge. He is undergoing treatment at the TMCH with nine sutures on his head.

Mr. Santhosh riled the supporters of Minister 'Kadambur' C. Raju with this question. Chastened by this experience, officials did not allow reporters to accompany Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam when he came visiting. Nevertheless, Mr. Panneerselvam had to face this question from Mr. Santhosh, sources at TMCH said.

And, on Wednesday, Mr. Rajinikanth too faced the question but he moved on

with a smile.

Meanwhile, Rajini Makkal Mandram office-bearers, who had mobilised the family members of eight persons killed in the riot in a private resort on Thoothukudi outskirts as he met the media, did not take them to meet the actor. “We were asked to come to the resort at 9 a.m. itself to receive the assistance of Rs. 2 lakh each to the families of the deceased. But we were not allowed to meet him,” said Mary, aunt of Snowlin, who was waiting at the resort since morning

TAMIL NADU

'Rajinikanth wrong in condemning protesters'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THANJAVUR, MAY 31, 2018 00:00 IST

CPI (M) State secretary K. Balakrishnan on Wednesday alleged that actor Rajinikanth had trivialised the anti-Sterlite struggle by commenting that anti-socials had triggered the violence on May 22, which led to police firing.

Addressing the media, Mr. Balakrishnan contended that Mr. Rajinikanth had sought to portray the anti-Sterlite protesters as arsonists and trouble-mongers. He had also alleged that anti-socials and separatists had piloted the jallikattu protests. The actor was belittling democratic means of struggle and that needed to be condemned vehemently, he felt.

Wondering whether Mr. Rajinikanth could justify the death of police firing victims and support Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, Mr.

Balakrishnan alleged that the actor was donning the role of BJP mouthpiece and playing second fiddle to the saffron party. Mr. Rajinikanth must openly apologise for his comments, the Left leader demanded.

The Government was trying to hide the facts on the circumstances that led to the police firing that resulted in loss of lives in Thoothukudi. The truth would come out only when a commission of inquiry headed by a sitting judge of the Madras High Court was constituted, Mr. Balakrishnan said.

HC orders re-postmortem on 7 bodies by expert team

Says mortal remains be handed over to relatives; procedure videographed

SIVA SEKARAN @ Chennai

A vacation bench of the Madras High Court has ordered re-post mortem on the seven bodies of victims of police firing on May 22 and 23 at Thoothukudi during the protest against Sterlite factory.

A bench of Justices S Baskaran and R M T Teekkaaraman gave the directive while passing further interim orders on a batch of PIL petitions from the family members of the victims, late on Wednesday evening.

The bench directed the government to form a team for post-mortem with three doctors, two doctors who had already been formulated by it and in addition to that, one doctor in the forensic department not below the rank of Reader from any one of the institutions— All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) (any branch)/ JIPMER, Puducherry/ Government Medical College, Trivandrum, Kerala) – subject to their availability.

The three doctors shall form a team and conduct the re-post mortem on the seven bodies in the presence of the same Judicial Magistrate who was present at the time of the first post-mortem. The same team shall also conduct the post-mortem on the remaining six bodies in the presence of Judicial Magistrate nominated for that purpose by the concerned Chief Judicial Magistrate. Such a team, before autopsy, shall carry out an X-ray examination of the full body, region by region (front and lateral views). This should be done, as a rule, in all cases.

During post-mortem, a photograph of the victim without removing clothes shall be taken. Front and back views should be photographed. While removing

clothes, care must be taken to detect loose bullets. Holes made due to bullets should be examined (with clean hands) and a record made in post-mortem notes. The clothes must not be allowed to fall on the floor. Blood-soaked clothes should be air-dried before packaging. The clothes showing the bullet hole should preferably be put in a separate packet. The undressed body should then be photographed at different angles. A measuring tape extending from the sole to the top of head should be included in the photograph.

A close-up photograph (which includes a scale) of each wound should be taken without washing the wounds.

Sensitive issue

The bench observed that these directions have been given taking into consideration the sensitivity of the issue involved and the law and order problem

An X-ray of the body in front and side views is desirable to locate the bullet embedded in the body. At times, a bullet may be palpated beneath intact skins/swelling opposite the wound of entry.

The external wounds on body-entry/and exit, should be described in detail. The location of all firearm wounds should be described in relation to anatomical landmarks (nipples, navel). The height (or distance) of the wound should be measured and recorded from the sole of foot to determine the track of the bullet inside the body. Handling bullets with metal instruments should be avoided.

Identification marks should be made on the base of the bullet from later identification.

After completion of the re-post mortem on the seven bodies and fresh one on the remaining six bodies as stated above, it is open to the respective parents or the relatives of the deceased to move the government seeking the body for the performance of last rites, if they desire so and on such application, the government should hand over the same.

Earlier, Advocate-General Vijay Narayan said that the State apprehended some law and order problem at the time of handing over of the dead bodies in the Government Hospital/mortuary. In view of the apprehension, the bench directed the officials to hand over the bodies only to the relatives of the deceased in the government hospital or mortuary and except the relatives, no other persons shall be permitted in the premises.

The official should ensure peaceful performance of the last rituals without any law and order problem in the respective area and file a status report of the number of persons who have sustained grievous injury/injuries, now undergoing treatment in the government hospital/private hospital/super-speciality hospital, as per the direction given by the earlier order on May 23.

The services of the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) of Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli, Kanyakumari, Virudhunagar and Madurai, shall be utilised for the purpose of identification of the relatives and the DLSA should extend the fullest co-operation to the victim families in rendering the legal assistance. The entire postmortem should be videographed, the bench added.



CPM seeks Rajini's apology for anti-social 'slur' on protesters

Terming his comments 'anti-people', party says actor-politician was backing State government's actions; urges DMK to reconsider Assembly boycott

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE@Thanjavur

CPM State secretary K Balakrishnan on Wednesday and slammed actor-politician Rajinikanth's comment that "anti-social elements" had infiltrated into the anti-Sterlite protest and appealed to the DMK to reconsider its decision to boycott the Assembly session since it's the main opposition party.

"Were the 20,000 people who protested against Sterlite anti-social? Rajinikanth should tender a public apology for his comments," he said, adding that the actor had made similar remarks against jallikattu protesters also.

Terming the comments "anti-people", Balakrishnan said Rajini was supporting the State government's "oppressive" actions.

Earlier, talking to reporters in Thoothukudi, Rajini called for a Jayalalithaa-style "iron fist" policy to crush such "anti-social elements" in the interest of the State and refused to endorse the opposition demand for the resignation of Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami.

"The attack on the collector's office and setting on fire (Sterlite) quarters was not done by the common people. Some anti-social elements infiltrated... It is their handiwork," he said and lamented that a "noble protest"

had ended on a bloody note.

The CPM leader also questioned the delay in the notification of the Cauvery Water Management Authority even after the Supreme Court's order. "For the last six years the farmers have lost Kuruvai crop. They want to cultivate the crop at least this year. The governments should ensure water release from the Mettur dam in time", he said.

Condemning the killing of two Dalits in Kachanatham village in Sivagangai district, the CPM leader wanted all the caste Hindus involved arrested forthwith and the victims' kin given ₹50 lakh each as compensation.



Future of trade sector uncertain, say industrialists

Sterlite's byproducts like sulphuric acid, gypsum, rock phosphate and other raw materials would be left bearing the brunt, they opine

S GODSON WISELY DASS
@ Thoothukudi

THERE has been a mixed response from the public and industrialists to the news of the closure of the Sterlite Copper unit. While a section of industrialists said that it would heavily impact business prospects, another said that business would remain unaffected. Some others felt that the nearby companies that got the company's byproducts like sulphuric acid, gypsum, rock phosphate and other raw materials would be left bearing the brunt.

The general public was, by and large, happy with the closure of the unit. While they studiously avoided loud celebrations and fanfare, they said that the victory may be dedicated to the 13 victims who sacrificed their lives for the cause.

Spokesperson of Vedanta Limited's Sterlite Copper said, "The closure is an unfortunate development, especially considering that we have been operating the plant for over 22 years in a most transparent and sustainable way contributing to Tuticorin's and the State's socio-economic development. We will study the order and decide on future course of action."

Some felt that the stevedores and the shipping agencies would be impacted.

All India Chambers of Commerce District President GP Joe Prakash stated that the closure of Sterlite Copper would not have an impact on the business front. "Any industry that runs at the cost of public health cannot be allowed," he added.

Thoothukudi Container Lorry Owners' Association Secretary Mathialagan said that the lorry logistics was not entirely dependent on Sterlite Copper's import and export. While welcoming the closure of copper unit, he also mentioned that the health of the public should get priority.

On condition of anonymity, an industrialist said that the impact of the Sterlite closure would be realised only after six months.

A top government official from the revenue department told *Express* that the closure of

The company provided employment for thousands of employees and labourers which contributed to the growth of the economy of Thoothukudi
An industrialist

the company would adversely affect the industrial corridor prospects in Thoothukudi. A substantial part of the Global Investment Meet (GIM) organised in 2015 was to be developed in Thoothukudi owing to its port facilities, he added.

"Sterlite was paying ₹2000 crore, nearly half of the total revenue of industrial taxes to Thoothukudi. Besides, over 4000 employees were directly employed and 15,000 were indirectly benefiting from the copper smelter plant. All of them are staring at uncertainty today," the official added.

A Sterlite employee stated the company was disbursing a total of at least ₹13 crore as monthly salary for the employees, which used to be circulated in the society and encouraged brisk business. "However, when you suck ₹13 crore from the public domain, it will create scarcity and affect the economy as well as job opportunities," he further said.



'Trade would be badly hit'

If the scenario goes unchecked, industrialists will become apprehensive about launching factories, and employment, trade and commerce will be affected, said Rajinikanth

Actor Rajinikanth during his visit to Thoothukudi medical college hospital on Wednesday | M BALANURUGAN

Victim receives ₹20 lakh solatium from State

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Thoothukudi

GUNFIRE victim Selvasekar's family members received a cheque for ₹20 lakh as solatium from the State government here, on Tuesday. Selvasekar's family is the first among the families of the 13 victims to get the compensation from the government.

On Tuesday, Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit made a visit to Selvasekar's home and condoled his death. He met the victim's mother and other family members. The same evening, the Srivaikuntam tahsildar Thomas Arul Pious handed over the cheque for ₹20 lakh to Selvasekar's mother Masanam, in the presence of Tasmac Depot Manager Ramachandran, Zonal Deputy Tasildar Ramakrishnan, Revenue Inspector Muthulakshmi, and the Village Administration Officer (VAO) Meenatchi.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, Collector Sandeep Nanduri gave a cheque for ₹5 lakh to one Sugumar, son of Velthurai of Kootampull, who sustained injuries during firing on May 22. Sugumar's mother received the cheque.

So far, the district administration has conducted post-mortem on the bodies of Shanmugam of Masilamanipuram, Karthik of Sivanthakulam Road, Kanthaiah of Chinnamani Nagar, Jayaram of Ayyanarpatti, Kallappan of Mapiyaiyoorani and Selvasekar of Peikulam near Sawyerpuram.

Rajini visits victims of police firing

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Thoothukudi

SUPERSTAR Rajinikanth visited the victims of police firing at the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital, on Wednesday, and conveyed his heartfelt grief over the incident.

Even as he came down the Palayamkottai Road from the Thoothukudi airport, Rajini's fans gathered on either side to have a glimpse of their favourite star. The actor visited the injured victims at the hospitals at around 12 noon, amid tight security. Police denied him permission to visit the families of the deceased at their houses, because of security concerns.

Later, meeting reporters at Sathya Resort, Rajinikanth said that the gunfire victims undergoing treatment at the ThMCH are in fear, while some are fatigued. The police firing was an unfortunate incident

Tragedy politicised

When asked about opposition parties' demand for resignation of the CM, Rajini distanced himself and refused to answer. "Resignation is not all. They just politicised the tragedy," he said

and it should not be repeated, he added.

"The protest against the Sterlite unit was going on peacefully for 100 days, but the rally turned violent due to the intrusion of anti-social elements and ended in bloodshed. The anti-social elements should be controlled with an iron hand, as was done by the former Chief Minister J Jayalithaa," Rajinikanth said, appreciating her strong governance.

Coming down heavily against the violence, the 67-year-old actor wanted those involved in the rioting and assaulting the police not to be spared. "They should be declared anti-social elements. Tamil Nadu is staring at the danger of policemen being manhandled. Then how can they safeguard the citizens?" he wondered.

When asked about the future of Sterlite, Rajini said, "A closure has been ordered. But if they go to court challenging the order, then they are not human." Warning protesters to be careful while taking part in agitations, Rajinikanth asked them to ensure that they abided by the law. When asked about shootout order, Rajini said there was total confusion regarding the issue. The police did not expect such a massive crowd, he said, while also alleging intelligence failure.



Rajini visits victims of Thoothukudi police firing

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Thoothukudi

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Rajinikanth at the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital on Wednesday | EXPRESS

abided by the law. Expressing concerns over the protests spilling everywhere, he said, "If the scenario goes unchecked, industrialists will become apprehensive about launching factories in the state."

When asked about the shootout order, Rajini said police did not expect such a massive crowd, while also alleging intelligence failure. When asked about the opposition parties' demand for the resignation of the Chief Minister, Rajini said, "Resignation is not all. They just politicised the tragedy."

Victim receives ₹20 lakh solatium

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DMK working president addresses model Assembly at Anna Arivalayam on Wednesday. — DC

DMK holds mock Assembly on Thoothukudi issue

Chennai, May 30: DMK on Wednesday held a mock assembly session here and hit out at Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami over the recent Tuticorin police firings in which 13 persons were killed.

Seeking to intensify its attack and mobilise public opinion against the AIADMK government on the issue, party working president M K Stalin said such mock sessions of the assembly will be held across the state. "This mock assembly is only a precursor. It will be held across Tamil Nadu to expose the AIADMK government which has

betrayed the people," he said addressing the 'session' held at DMK headquarters here.

DMK has yesterday announced it would boycott the ongoing budget session of the state assembly until the Sterlite copper unit in Tuticorin was "permanently shut". Sharpening his attack on the government over the police firings on May 22 and 23, Stalin today sought legal action against those responsible for the deaths. He "moved a resolution" for providing Rs one crore each as solatium for the kin of those killed in police firings. The state

government had announced a solatium of Rs 20 lakh each.

"This is an assembly of people's conscience gathered to send home those who are in power," Stalin claimed, accusing the government of betraying people on issues including Cauvery. He said it was during the AIADMK regime (when Jayalalithaa was the Chief Minister) the consent was given for the operation of the Sterlite's copper plant. Stalin reiterated his party's demand that cases be filed against those responsible for the police firings.

Rajini blames it on anti-socials

M. ARUL OLI & P. A. JEBARAJ
THOOTHUKUDI/CHENNAI,
MAY 30

Superstar Rajinikanth on Wednesday blamed anti-socials for the violence during the anti-Sterlite rally on May 22 that resulted in 13 deaths in police firing and warned that Tamil Nadu would end up as a 'graveyard' if too many agitations disrupt order in the state. He wanted a Jayalithaa-style 'iron fist' policy to crush the anti-socials "as otherwise this state would face serious danger".

Looking visibly annoyed and angry as a couple of reporters heckled him at his media interaction at Chennai airport, asking him to substantiate his allegation about the anti-socials' infiltration, Rajinikanth said it was "absolutely true that 'problem started only after the police came under attack from such anti-social elements'".

Attacks on policemen should not be tolerated at any time as then there would be no protection for the seven million people in the state, he asserted,



An injured person at Thoothukudi government medical college hospital holds Rajinikanth's hands when he visited people at the hospital on Wednesday. — DC

● **"I can never accept policemen being attacked. Seven crore people are there to protect. Who will protect if the police come under attack? We cannot allow that. There are video visuals showing the people who attacked the police. They should be identified and brought to book, their pictures should be published"**

before walking away from what was becoming a verbal duel between him and a section of the media.

The reporters were repeatedly quizzing him if he had any evidence of anti-socials infiltrating and also mentioned that

the opposition leaders had reacted angrily to his 'infiltration' charge made earlier at his Thoothukudi media meet, saying that the anti-Sterlite protesters felt humiliated that he was branding them as anti-socials. ■ P4

Insulting integrity of protesters by blaming anti-socials for violence: Opposition leaders Smiles for Rajini turn to spite within hours

ARUL OLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 30

For the first time since the terrible violence and 13 deaths in police firing last week shook them, the people here cheered and smiled as they gathered in large numbers at the airport and, even at the hospital, to welcome Rajinikanth when he arrived from Chennai to share their grief and offer words of solace.

But within hours, many of these same people turned spiteful towards the superstar slamming him for his "anti-socials infiltrated" statement, which they said 'humiliated' them and put down their 'genuine' protest for Sterlite's closure.

"He (Rajini) was speechless looking at us and shed tears. Those tears made us understand how humane he is", gushed fisherman Evulin Victoria undergoing treatment for injuries sustained in the police action at the GH. But by evening, Evulin had changed his opinion as he came to know about Rajini's 'infiltration' charge.

"He too has betrayed us", said the fisherman, sounding pretty much bitter. Same was the case with Maria Siluvai, who had forgotten the pain in his wounds and was on cloud nine after Rajini held his hand and told him to take care of his health and look after his family.

"He should not have belittled our struggle by saying anti-socials infiltrated it", he said.

Fifty-year-old Vasanthi was in the hospital looking after her injured son Santhosh. On hearing about the 'infiltration' charge, she concluded that Rajini "did not come



An injured person at Thoothukudi government medical college hospital holds Rajinikanth's hands when he visited the hospital on Wednesday.

- DC

here to express his solidarity with us but only to demean us". Now she is busy canvassing with the injured people, numbering 47, to return the Rs 10,000 the star gifted each of them, as show of protest.

Almost all the political parties, barring the BJP, have slammed Rajinikanth accusing him of insulting the integrity of the protesters by blaming anti-socials for the violence. "Let him go through the list of the 13 dead and identify himself as to who among them was anti-social", said DMK spokesman TKS Elangovan, Rajya Sabha member.

Ally Congress' state president Su.Thirunavukarasu, State Marxist secretary K. Balakrishnan and VCK chief Thol. Thirumavalavan voiced similar views while attacking Rajinikanth.

Rajinikanth's statement draws flak

DC CORRESPONDENT,
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 30

Rajinikanth's stern statement on the infiltration of anti-socials in the anti-Sterlite stir has triggered controversy as the activists and political leaders here slammed him alleging 'insensitivity' towards people's issues.

CPM central committee member, U Vasuki came down upon the actor and sought his 'public apology' for humiliating the protesters with his "irresponsible accusation". She said even his earlier statements against public protests and demonstrations showed that Rajinikanth was firmly against people's struggle.

K Santhosh Raj, coordinator of 'All students union of Thoothukudi',

'BAN ON 'KAALA' RELEASE IN K'TAKA WILL BE RESOLVED'

Chennai, May 30: Superstar Rajinikanth on Wednesday expressed hope that the issue of a ban on the release of his upcoming film "Kaala" in Karnataka will be resolved amicably by the South Indian Film Chamber of Commerce. Miffed with his comments on the Cauvery row, the Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce yesterday decided not to allow the screening of the film, which is slated to release on June 7.

who is undergoing treatment at Thoothukudi GH for injuries sustained in the police action, said he suspected that Rajinikanth's trip was "a plot hatched by state and the Central governments

Vedanta Ltd's intention to resuming production slammed

Rajinikanth also slammed Vedanta Ltd, which runs the Sterlite copper unit, for speaking about resuming production when the trauma of May 22 violence was still haunting the people. Cautioning Vedanta against moving the court over the TN GO ordering the unit's closure, he

said, "They are not humans if they do so". "With so many deaths and injuries, they should not even think of doing that," he said, adding, nothing can stand before people's power and besides, judges too are human and would well understand the situation

Rajini used same words for IPL, Jallikattu stir also

FROM P1

Showing aggressive body language, Rajinikanth said the same kind of anti-socials had infiltrated the Jallikattu protest at Marina to make it violent during the last stage and the pattern was repeated during the IPL demonstration in Chennai.

Now too, the anti-Sterlite protest turned bloody because of the 'infiltration' on May 22 while it had been peaceful for 99 days of continuous agitation by the people, he argued, adding: "The people, who participated in the protests, including the fishermen, are innocent".

Asked if the police were not responsible for the bloodshed, the superstar said it was true that the police intelligence failed but that did not mean the infiltrators were not to be blamed. The violent elements infiltrating genuine anti-Sterlite protesters attacked the Collector's office, torched the vehicles parked in the Sterlite quarters and beat up the police brutally, he said. "The attackers must be identified from CCTV video clips, brought to book and their identity publicised in the media".

Earlier, speaking to reporters at Thoothukudi after meeting those injured in the police firing, Rajinikanth dismissed as 'mere politics' the opposition demand for the resignation of Chief Minister K Palaniswami. "If you demand resignation for everything, what (is the purpose)... I don't want to talk about that," he said.

On the other hand, he said, the government should take firm steps against the anti-socials. "On that front I laud Jayalalithaa as she kept such elements under check with an iron fist. They should follow her policy and keep them under check, as otherwise it will result in great danger for Tamil Nadu," he said.

The Karnataka film industry is upset with Rajinikanth's reported statement that whichever government comes to power in Karnataka, it should implement the Supreme Court order on Cauvery water sharing. Speaking to reporters here prior to his visit to Tuticorin to meet survivors of a police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters last week, Rajinikanth said the Karnataka chamber was part of the South Indian Film Chamber of Commerce. "The Karnataka chamber is part of the South Indian Film Chamber (of Commerce). Definitely they will intervene and resolve it amicably," he said. KFCC president Sa Ra Govindu had said yesterday that it has been decided not to screen Rajinikanth's film in Karnataka. "A decision has been taken that Rajinikanth's movie will neither be distributed nor screened anywhere in Karnataka," he had said. — PTI

to divert the issue". Earlier when Rajinikanth visited the injured at the hospital, Santhosh sought to embarrass the actor by asking him, "Who are you? Where were you for

100 days when people were on relay protest against Sterlite?" While Santhosh told DC that the actor "just walked away with a smile", the video of his 'brief meeting with the star has gone viral.

NATIONAL

DGP submits report on Thoothukudi firing



CHENNAI, JUNE 01, 2018 00:00 IST

In one of the first written submissions made on behalf of the DGP before the Madras HC with respect to last week's firing that claimed 13 lives in Thoothukudi district, the police department has provided graphic details of its version of the incidents. The police were forced to fire to save the lives of Collectorate staff and family members of Sterlite employees, the report says.

TAMIL NADU

Firing provoked by violence at five locations, says DGP



Mohamed Imranullah S.

CHENNAI, JUNE 01, 2018 00:00 IST

Report to High Court claims protesters were shot to save the lives of Collectorate staff, families of Sterlite employees and policemen

In a written submission made on behalf of the Director General of Police (DGP) before the Madras High Court with respect to last week's firing that claimed 13 lives in Thoothukudi district, the Police Department has provided graphic details of its version of the incidents.

A status report filed by Assistant Inspector General of Police (Law and Order) S. Maheshwaran, on behalf of the DGP, says that violence had erupted at five different locations on May 22 and 23, forcing the police to use firearms at four of those places and resort to lathicharge alone in the fifth.

The status report names only one Zonal Deputy Tahsildar who had ordered

the use of firepower to disperse the crowd in Therespuram at 3 p.m. on May 22, leading to the death of J. Jancy Rani, 37, and does not name officials who ordered firing at other locations.

The report was filed by Mr. Maheshwaran in response to a public interest litigation petition filed by a group of three lawyers seeking a detailed inquiry by the Thoothukudi Principal District Judge.

According to the AIG, it was the villagers of Ayyareddiyurani alias A. Kumareddiapuram led by the Anti-Sterlite Movement president Mahesh, who began a peaceful agitation from dawn to dusk, demanding the closure of the Sterlite Copper smelter owing to environmental concerns.

Plan to lay siege

Days before the agitations were to reach the 100th day on May 22, representatives of various organisations passed a resolution to lay siege to the Collectorate on that day. Immediately, revenue and police officials called for a peace meeting wherein it was agreed to hold peaceful protests.

On May 22, a huge crowd gathered near the Lady of Snow Church and it started proceeding towards the Collectorate. Similarly, villagers around the copper plant assembled at the Madathur junction and began marching towards the Collectorate. Around 20,000 people were present.

They indulged in “various violent activities and reached the Collectorate with a virulent face. Efforts to stop them at various places ended in vain. When they reached the Collectorate, the violent mob pelted stones, attacked police personnel and damaged police and public vehicles. All efforts to control and dispose [sic] the violent crowd failed,” the AIG said, and went on to state that a mob entered the residential quarters of Sterlite company employees adjacent to the Collectorate and set fire to a power generator and all vehicles parked in the apartments.

“The inmates, around 150 family members, were struggling for life. The mob in front of the Collectorate did not allow any fire engine or rescue team to enter the burning premises... As a last resort, to safeguard the lives of Collectorate staff, policemen and the 150 residents of Sterlite quarters, controlled use of fire [arms] was resorted to in and around the Collectorate

complex.

Estimate of loss

An Executive Engineer attached to the Public Works Department had assessed the damage caused to the Collectorate and allied government offices to be Rs. 28.12 lakh. Further, damage to vehicles, a police booth and a government liquor shop was assessed to be Rs. 15.67 crore.

Thereafter, at 1 p.m. on the same day, a mob of around 3,000 people moved towards the Food Corporation of India roundabout and started pelting stones. The rioters did not retreat despite the use of tear gas and lathicharge. They, instead, assaulted and attempted to kill policemen. This time again, the police opened fire leading to the death of M. Karthik, 20. At about 1.35 p.m., the retreating mob as well as a crowd from the other side attacked the policemen once again. Two government buses were burnt down. The police managed to disperse the mob through lathicharge, and another case of rioting was booked in connection with this incident. At around 3 p.m., Deputy Tahsildar Kannan issued orders for opening fire at Therespuram and it led to the death of one Rani. Further, three government-run liquor shops in Muthukrishnapuram, Ponnagaram and Sundaravelpuram were damaged during this bout of violence.

Property damaged

On May 23, a violent mob of around 1,000 people started rioting at Anna Nagar Main Road and damaged a liquor shop at Toovipuram, besides setting ablaze government properties around the area. The police opened fire once again killing S. Kaliappan, 22, of Mappillaiyurani.

The AIG also stated the then Superintendent of Police P. Mahendran (since transferred) also sustained injuries during the violence.

TAMIL NADU

Actor expresses regret



STAFF REPORTER

CHENNAI, JUNE 01, 2018 00:00 IST

Actor Rajinikanth expressed regret for his angry outburst while responding to a journalist over his comments on Thoothukudi incident in Chennai on Wednesday.

He was answering questions after returning from Thoothukudi.

In a tweet, Mr. Rajinikanth referred to a statement issued by the Madras Union of Journalists condemning his action and said, “Journalists seem to have felt that I spoke in a threatening manner, referring to them without respect. I regret using such words if it had hurt them.”

AIADMK hails statement

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, JUNE 01, 2018 00:00 IST

'He has spoken with conscience'

A day after actor Rajinikanth appeared to support the stand of Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami over the police firing in Thoothukudi, the ruling AIADMK mouthpiece Namadhu Puratchi Thalaivi Amma welcomed the former's statement.

In an article published on Thursday, the daily said that the actor had spoken with conscience. Mr. Rajinikanth had said that he believed that anti-social elements had infiltrated the anti-Sterlite protest march, leading to violence.

It welcomed Mr. Rajinikanth's statement that the resignation of the Chief Minister wouldn't be the solution. The article said that Mr. Rajinikanth statements (that continuous protests would turn Tamil Nadu into a graveyard) were a befitting reply to Communists and those who supporting protests every other time.

Meanwhile, during an interaction with reporters on Thursday, when asked about the statement of Mr. Rajinikanth, Fisheries Minister D. Jayakumar said as an individual person, the actor could say anything he wanted.

TAMIL NADU

Inquest to be held on June 2 and 3

STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 01, 2018 00:00 IST

A coalition of civil society organisations in Tamil Nadu, led by president of Thoothukudi Bar Association, A.W.D. Tilak, will hold an inquest into the firing on protesters during anti-Sterlite agitation, here on June 2 and 3.

According to a statement from the Bar Association on Thursday, the inquest will be held to ascertain facts that led to protests for 100 days.

It is aimed at ascertaining facts and circumstances of incidents which led to the police firing by gathering statements from eye witnesses, families of the deceased, officials of the district administration and the police.

Later, the team would disclose interim findings and observations on June 3.

TAMIL NADU

Sarathkumar consoles victims

STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 01, 2018 00:00 IST

It was unfortunate that actor Rajinikanth, who met victims of police firing during the anti-Sterlite agitation at the Government Medical College Hospital here, had branded protesters as 'anti-social elements,' R. Sarathkumar, president, All India Samaththuva Makkal Katchi, said here on Thursday.

Addressing the media after consoling families of victims in the hospital, he said Rajinikanth was supporting companies.

Death of 13 people during the protest was an irreparable loss. Prime Minister Narendra Modi too did not express his regret for the death of 13 people in Thoothukudi, he said.

Earlier, he met members of 13 families, who had lost their relatives in the firing, and expressed his grief over the loss. Besides, he gave away Rs. 50,000 to each of the deceased family, party sources said.

'Closure of Sterlite will affect industrial climate'



STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 01, 2018 00:00 IST

'Prospects of industries which depend on this unit are bleak'

The closure of Sterlite Copper has cast a shadow on the shipping industry, its ancillary and service industries.

In fact, the entire local economy has suffered a lot. Several stakeholders relying on export and import trade under the logistic support of seaport feel that the closure would affect industrial investments in this city.

Hundreds of workers depend directly and indirectly on this closed unit.

Industries were source of job opportunities but they should adhere to pollution control and other relevant norms, shipping industry leaders said here on Thursday.

The closure would affect prospects of seaport also. The cargo handling capacity of V. O. Chidambaranar Port would see a downtrend in the coming days.

Around one million tonnes of industrial cargo shipments were normally made

376

by Sterlite through the port.

The State government, which hosted the global investors' meet some years back, would be embarrassed, as the closure had sent a wrong signal. Further, the Madurai -Thoothukudi Industrial Corridor project, which remains a non-starter, would not take off.

Apart from logistics industry, a major ancillary of the shipping industry, stakeholders depending on chemical, minerals and housekeeping industries were left in the lurch. Normally, around 500 trucks would transport industrial cargo but the movement had come down to 100. Besides, the number of vessels calling at the port had shown a negative trend. At least six cargo vessels with around 1.35 lakh tonnes of import and export cargo would have reached the port in the last two months but none had come.

Terming the closure as a "setback for Thoothukudi," sources said bulk cargo traffic in merchant vessels was not up in recent weeks as imports of raw material, project cargo and technical items had come to naught. It was not an enterprising spell for industries, which were dependent on this closed unit, in need of sulphuric and phosphoric acid, sources added.

Importers, exporters bear the brunt of blackout

Container liners charge ₹7,000 per day for a 20-foot container and ₹10,000 a day for a 40-ft container that had attained temperature

S GODSON WISELY DASS
@Thoothukudi

THE May 22 police firing, the violence that followed, the clamping of Section 144 and the closure of Internet services have cost importers and exporters a lot, with adamant ship agents and container liners functioning in the port city levying indiscriminate penalties for the delay in moving containers that had achieved temperature during the period of unrest.

Ship agents and container liners had denounced the request of the Tuticorin Customs Brokers Association seeking a waiver of temperature charges for the unmoved containers, underlining the force majeure existing in the industrial town.

Importers and exporters have lost at least Rs 5-10 crore due to the unrest, claimed the Association's secretary R Sreedhar.

There are nearly 300 customs brokers who help the importers and exporters to get customs clearance (CC) and make arrangements for delivering the consignment. Also, there are 29 container liners of multinational companies, and their franchisees, operating in the district, supplying containers measuring 20 feet and 40 feet, for packing cargo for export and issuing delivery order (DO) for the import.

The liners avail 10 days' free period for the export containers. And for import containers, the free period may be either five days or 14 days, based on the volume and the type of the commodity.

Due to the unrest prevailing in Thoothukudi city after the

police firing at the Anti-Sterilite rallyists on May 22, the central government stopped Internet facility between May 23 and 27, and also extended the prohibitory order under Section 144 of CrPC, till 8 a.m. on May 27. The blackout of the Internet and the non-transportation of vehicles prevented the movement of container cargoes from the port terminals and Container Freight Stations (CFS) which led to the temperature of consignments.

Sources said that the container liners charge Rs 7,000 per day for a 20-foot container and Rs 10,000 a day for a 40-foot container that had attained tempera-

10 core

The Tuticorin Customs Brokers Association has claimed a loss of at least Rs 5-10 crore to the importers and exporters due to the unrest in Thoothukudi following the police firing

ture. According to Sreedhar, as all the bills should be filed online, the absence of the Internet facility had halted all work for one week.

The containers that had reached the VOC Port terminal after May 10 attained temperature during the unrest period, and the penalty levied on them would be at least Rs 5-10 crore.

The container liners have refused to waive off the temperature charges, considering the situation in Thoothukudi, Sreedhar said. The petitions requesting waiver of penalties to the Ship Agents' Association on behalf of the Tuticorin Customs

Brokers Association were not considered, he said, adding that the district administration should take steps to address their grievances.

A Sivakasi-based businessman, who is importing a machinery for his match industry, said that his customs bill clearance was delayed due to the riot and that he was charged Rs 10,000 a day.

An employee at the customs brokering office, requesting anonymity, said that the container liners authorities are being unrelenting in spite of being told about the situation prevailing in the city. The concerned importer and exporter will have to bear the penalty, and it will damage the reputation of the customs brokers, he added.

Another customs broker said that the regional head of an international container liner was contacted, and it is learnt that he did not forward the request petitions to the headquarters in Mumbai and at a foreign location.

It may be noted that the union shipping ministry had relaxed time limits for filing a Bill of Entry at the e-Commerce Portal of Central Board of Excise and Customs (ICEgate), since May 23; otherwise, it would have cost Rs 5000 more for each bill after two days of arrival of the cargo.

The customs brokers have sought the intervention of District Collector Sandeep Nanduri to get a waiver from the container liners. The Collector should at least recommend the Ministry of Logistics and Transport to take severe action against the rogue container liners, said Ahamad Jan, a customs broker.

Bodies of two police firing victims handed over to kin after re-postmortem

SCHOOLS TO REOPEN ON JUNE 1

Thoothukudi: Schools will reopen on June 1, on schedule and as per the directions of the State School Education Ministry, said District Collector Sandeep Nanduri, through a press statement. Nanduri said that the situation in Thoothukudi has been normal for the past five days, and that law and order is well under control. All the government buses have resumed operations and the shops in the commercial areas have returned to business as usual, the statement said. The public has returned to normal living, it said. The people had sought a week's delay for the reopening of schools, in view of the police firing

DEATH TOLL RISES TO 14

Tirunelveli: The death toll in anti-Sterilite protest in Thoothukudi has risen to 14 with the death of an elderly woman who was undergoing treatment at Tirunelveli Medical College Hospital here on Thursday. The deceased, Valliammal (63), of Meganapuram suffered burn injuries when a bus was set ablaze by protesters



Shanmugam's body being taken to his house at Masilamaninagar from the Thoothukudi medical college hospital on Thursday | EXPRESS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Nagercoil

THE bodies of Shanmugam and Selvasekar, victims of the police firing on May 22, were handed over to their respective families, on Thursday evening, after conducting a re-postmortem as directed by the Madras High Court.

Following court orders to conduct another post-mortem on seven of the deceased, including Snowlin Sahaya Venista, Shanmugam, Karthick, Kanthaiah, Kaliappan, Jeyaraman and Selvasekar, a re-postmortem was conducted in the presence of Dr Ambiga Prasad Batura from the Department of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, JIPMER, Dr Selvamurugan, Dr Manoharan and Judicial Magistrates, here, on Thursday.

The Madras High Court had

ordered preserving the bodies of the 13 victims until May 31, while hearing a petition filed by the father of one of the victims, S Baliah (father of Shanmugam), in order to ascertain whether the post-mortem had been performed in adherence with the guidelines of the Supreme Court.

By evening, the re-postmortem on two bodies had been completed. The relatives of Shanmugam received the body by 5.30 p.m. while Selvasekar's relatives did so by 7 p.m. Shanmugam's body was cremated at the corporation cremation ground after dusk, while Selvasekar's family laid him to rest at the panchayat burial ground, at around 8.10 p.m., said sources.

District Collector Sandeep Nanduri has given an exception for the autopsy to continue after 6 p.m., said an official.



'Legal battle will ensure permanent closure of Sterlite'

S KUMARESAN @Chennai

THE State government's job is not done just by passing an order to close down Sterlite's copper plant at Thoothukudi, says Vaiko, MDMK general secretary. Only by carefully fighting a legal battle against the company it will be ensured that the plant is not reopened, he told *Express* in free-wheeling chat on the issue.

The recent phase of the anti-Sterlite protest could be mostly a people-led one. But, Vaiko was one of the early political leaders to have started the protests against Sterlite plant and led a prolonged legal battle. Excerpts from his interview to *Express*:

Is it the first victory for the people against Sterlite?

No, before 1994, the Sterlite copper smelting plant valued about ₹300 crore was razed down by the people of Maharashtra even though they got the licence from the then Sharad Pawar-led Maharashtra government. Following the incident, Maharashtra government cancelled their licence. But, Sterlite didn't go to court to get back the government licence as they realised that the people of Maharashtra will not allow them to operate the plant. That's the victory of the Maharashtra people as they were fully aware about the impact of the plant. Likewise, people of Thoothukudi and Tamil Nadu are now aware of the plant's hazardous impact.

How was your experience of legal battle against Sterlite?

The plant had visibly violated two mandatory rules. Firstly the plant should be established 25 km away from the sea shore as various protected marine creatures and coral reefs exist in the area. Secondly, a green belt should be established in the premises of the plant at a width of 250 metres to protect the environment. But, the plant has been established at 15 km from the shore and the green belt had been set up for only a width of 25 metres. By these two visible violations and other environmental pollution, we got the closure order against the Sterlite in 2013. But, even though the Supreme Court accepted our argument, they permitted to operate the plant to fulfill the copper need of the country as the Sterlite made several intensive efforts to get a favourable order.



MDMK general secretary Vaiko at his residence in Anna Nagar on Tuesday | ASHWIN PRASATH

Did the State government support you when you were engaged in the legal battle?

Till 2012, December, the Tamil Nadu government pro-actively supported the operation of the Sterlite. But, they changed their tone after March, 29, 2013 when hundreds of Thoothukudi residents suffered suffocation and fainted due to leakage of toxic gas from Sterlite. Following which, the State government filed a writ petition against Sterlite, after I filed a petition. Now, the State government should carefully pursue the legal battle against the plant as the organisation will go to any extent to resume operation.

What would be the reaction of Thoothukudi people if they fail in legal battle?

The people of Thoothukudi will converge and dismantle the plant like how Maharashtra people did against the plant during the early 90s if the court fail to stop the operation of the plant permanently. This is what many people told me when I visited the victims on 22nd, when the police firing occurred, and 23rd morning. They said that they won't be thwarted by the shooting. The people of Thoothukudi are ready to brave the bullets. That's why I said that the plant would be dismantled by the people.

What do you think about concerns raised by industrialists over the shutting of the plant?

They are speaking about the sustainable development. We also agree with the concept of sustainable development. But, we differ with them on the question of at what cost? We must never agree to destroy our natural resources and livelihood in the name of development.



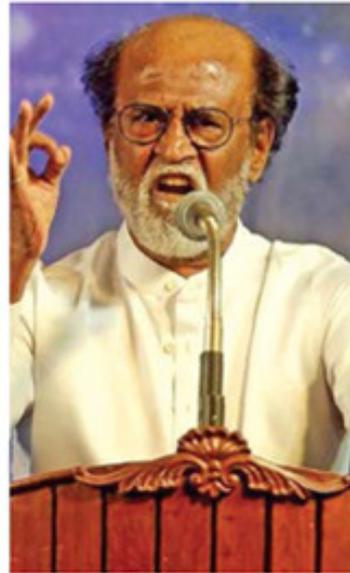
Rajinikanth regrets airport media row

S. THIRUNAVUKARASU
CHENNAI, MAY 31

Superstar Rajinikanth is faced with ferocious backlash to his Wednesday's chargesheet attributing the Thoothukudi violence to 'anti-socials' infiltrating what had hitherto been peaceful protest against Sterlite. Most of the political class in Tamil Nadu, apart from some social activists and even the public - particularly the left leaning - slamming him as being insensitive to people's struggle against a 'marauding corporate'.

There was some solace, though, as both the AIADMK and the BJP spoke up, rather forcefully, in support of the actor's 'bold' statement which they said was like a nail hit on the head. "Rajinikanth spoke with clear conscience when he said anti-socials had infiltrated the anti-Sterlite protest and that must be welcomed", said the AIADMK official organ 'Namadhu Pura-chithalaivi Amma' in its Thursday morning edition.

BJP state president Dr Tamilsai Sounderarajan insisted that her party has been warning for long that anti-socials have infiltrated peaceful public demonstrations to destroy peace. "The Thoothukudi agitation turned violent only because of anti-socials infiltrating. The protesting public never had any intention to throw stones and torch vehicles. One only needs to examine the dimension and direction the protest took to understand clearly that anti-socials had taken charge", she said, adding, "And so, we (BJP) have been saying all along what Rajinikanth has now said". ■ P4



STALIN SLAMS ACTOR-POLITICO ON STERLITE SLUR

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 31

The opposition DMK and allies came down heavily against the actor, accusing him of insulting the Thoothukudi protesters by branding them as anti-socials.

"He sounded like the mouthpiece of the BJP and the AIADMK", said DMK working president M.K.Stalin. "Rajinikanth, being the superstar, should point out the anti-socials among those protesters. Let's wait and see if he will do this".

Referring to the star's statement that Tamil Nadu would "turn into a graveyard if people start fighting for everything", Stalin said, "None can say there should be no agitations as life itself is a battle. Nothing can be achieved without fighting and nothing was - be it the Independence struggle or the fight for Jallikattu".

Vaiko: Arrest Rajini under NSA

FROM P1

State Congress president Su.Thirunavukarasu said he had gone to Thoothukudi along with Stalin and other leaders on the day after the police firing.

“We found no anti-socials and extremists there. Rajinikanth might have spoken in that fashion based on the information he had received, but it’s not entirely true”, he said.

MDMK chief Vaiko wanted Rajinikanth to be “arrested under NSA unless he comes out with details of the anti-socials who had infiltrated in the protest”. VCK leader Thol. Thirumavalavan saw a wide conflict between actor Rajini in his films advocating fight to get justice and the real-life Rajini now saying agitations would destroy Tamil Nadu - he was obviously alluding to the superstar’s latest flick Kaala whose trailer featured a hit song ‘Poraduvom’ shot on Rajini with the robust lyrics exhorting people to join him to “fight for our children, for revolution”.

Twitter bursts out against Rajini, supports agitators

FROM P1

But, having commented about anti-socials taking over the stir against the copper smelter, Rajini had placed himself in the path of the agitators like Santosh who had taken this up as a cause a few years ago.

Injured on the march with police lathis raining blows on him, Santosh's bitterness personified the feelings of youth of the district too that had taken up cudgels against the polluting corporate.

Rajini did not exactly win friends and influence people with his perception of how the Sterlite agitation had lost course with professional mischief makers taking control.

What Rajini said was unlikely to be popular.

In a scene made more confusing by the interplay of politics, religion and corporate disregard of public health - one clear instance of gas leak in 2013 was suf-

Predictably, the social media was afire with the superstar traffic, many slamming him for his 'infiltration' assertion. Rajinikanth got just as much support from the twiterati and on the FB for his 'bold' nail on the head, for speaking out the truth without any political strings attached. Some of them also argued that he had not rubbished the entire crowd of genuine protesters at Thoothukudi but only had spoken of the anti-social elements from outside who had infiltrated to cause the havoc on May 22 morning. "He did not mention Tamil people as anti-social elements. He said anti-social elements are hijacking Tamil peoples good deed", tweeted Ashwin, one such supporter.

ficient to sustain the description - no one knows where the truth lies and fake news begins.

The bitter truth is 13 people died from police firing and the Twitterati were naturally incensed enough to be wholly on the side of the agitators. The Superstar can only smile and move on much as he did when tendering regret over his altercation with the media at the Chennai airport on the way back from the coast.

It took only a few hours for hashtags like #NaanThanPaRajinikanth and #AntiTamilRajinikanth to take pole position in the 15 minutes of fame everyone in the world is owed, as the late Andy Warhol said.

If Rajini did not know this already, the star who has played the anti-Establishment hero in many of his films and come out triumphant would have realised politics is a different world.

Fresh post-mortem on seven victims' bodies begins

M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 31

As per the Madras High Court order, fresh post-mortem on the bodies of seven of the 13 people killed in police firing in the protest against Sterlite, commenced at the Thoothukudi government medical college hospital on Thursday.

The court gave its ruling for re-post-mortem of the seven bodies that the police claimed to have done after getting proper consent from the relatives of the dead, as a petition was filed alleging tampering of evidences.

The bodies taken for re-post-mortem are of Selvasekar, Kandhaiah, Snowlin Venista, Kaliappan, Shanmugam, Tamilarasan and Karthik.

The re-post-mortem has been performed by two doctors from Thoothukudi government medical college hospital-Dr Manoharan and Dr Sudalaimuthu, both from the department of Forensic medicine in the presence of a specially appointed physician Dr Ambika Prasad Patra, department of Forensic science and Toxicology, Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER) Pondicherry.

Four judicial magistrates too have been appointed to monitor the re-post-mortem as has been directed by the High Court. And the entire process has been video-graphed, according to the hospital sources.

The body of 32-year-old Shanmugam of Masilamanipuram in Thoothukudi was handed over to his father, Balaiah, at around 5.10 pm and the re-post-mortem for the deceased Selvasekar commenced at 5.20 pm.

According to hospital sources the fresh post-mortem would continue all through the night so as to ensure the completion of the re-postmortem of the rest of the bodies and handed over them to their relatives by Friday (June 1).

‘SUPERSTAR’ POLITICIAN GETS A JOLT IN THOOTHUKUDI HOSP

R. MOHAN

CHENNAI, MAY 31

Rajinikanth may have showed great composure when a patient at the Thoothkudi hospital posed the question - "Who are you?" The actor smiled and said, "I am Rajinikanth". If the Superstar had not been aware of the feelings running in coastal Tamil Nadu over the Sterlite Copper plant, his meeting with K. Santosh Raj might have been a cruel lesson in reality.

The youth had showered similar bitterness on official visitors from the government in Information Minister Kadambur Raju and the Dy CM OPS. But none of that had Twitterati atwitter as the one concerning the actor Rajini. The topic was trending on Twitter as the enormity of the challenge to charisma sank in.

The trolling may have been a new experience too, although Rajini is already more than knee deep into the quagmire of Tamil Nadu politics. ■ **P4**

■ After Madras HC order on Thoothukudi tragedy

Fresh post-mortem on 7 victims bodies begins

M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 31:

As per the Madras high Court order, fresh post-mortem on the bodies of seven of the 13 people killed in police firing in the protest against Sterlite, commenced at the Thoothukudi government medical college hospital on Thursday.

The court gave its ruling for re-post-mortem of the seven bodies that the police claimed to have done after getting proper consent from the relatives of the dead, as a petition was filed alleging tampering of evidences.

The bodies taken for re-post-mortem are of Selvasekar, Kandhaiah, Snowlin Venista, Kaliappan, Shanmugam, Tamilarasan and Karthik.

The re-post-mortem has been performed by two doctors from Thoothukudi government medical college hospital-Dr Manoharan and Dr Sudalaimuthu, both from the department of Forensic medicine in the presence of a specially appointed physician Dr Ambika Prasad Patra, department of Forensic science and Toxicology, Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER) Pondicherry.

Four judicial magistrates too have been appointed to monitor the re-post-mortem as has been directed by the High Court. And the entire process has been videographed, according to the hospital sources.

The body of 32-year-old

Shanmugam of Masilamanipuram in Thoothukudi was handed over to his father, Balaiah, at around 5.10 pm and the re-post-mortem for the deceased Selvasekar commenced at 5.20 pm. According to hospital sources the fresh post-mortem would continue all through the night so as to ensure the completion of the re-postmortem of the rest of the bodies and handed over them to their relatives by Friday (June 1).

In view of the performance of the re-post-mortem of the seven deceased, security has been beefed up in and around the Thoothukudi medical college hospital and the patients and their relatives were allowed after security checks. The police also used drones

for aerial surveillance around the government hospital area to check if miscreants created any problem in the name of funeral procession while taking the bodies of the deceased for the last rites.

Adhering to the Madras High court rulings, the officials strictly stated that the bodies of the deceased after the fresh post-mortem would be handed over only to their relatives.

The bodies of the six others killed-Jeyaraman, Jancy, Anthony Selvaraj, Glaston, Maniraj and Ranjith Kumar, however, are preserved in the mortuary until the High court's further orders. Post-mortem of these six bodies has not yet been performed as their relatives are yet to give their consent.

NATIONAL

DGP submits report on Thoothukudi firing



CHENNAI, JUNE 01, 2018 00:00 IST

In one of the first written submissions made on behalf of the DGP before the Madras HC with respect to last week's firing that claimed 13 lives in Thoothukudi district, the police department has provided graphic details of its version of the incidents. The police were forced to fire to save the lives of Collectorate staff and family members of Sterlite employees, the report says.

TAMIL NADU

Firing provoked by violence at five locations, says DGP



Mohamed Imranullah S.

CHENNAI, JUNE 01, 2018 00:00 IST

Report to High Court claims protesters were shot to save the lives of Collectorate staff, families of Sterlite employees and policemen

In a written submission made on behalf of the Director General of Police (DGP) before the Madras High Court with respect to last week's firing that claimed 13 lives in Thoothukudi district, the Police Department has provided graphic details of its version of the incidents.

A status report filed by Assistant Inspector General of Police (Law and Order) S. Maheshwaran, on behalf of the DGP, says that violence had erupted at five different locations on May 22 and 23, forcing the police to use firearms at four of those places and resort to lathicharge alone in the fifth.

The status report names only one Zonal Deputy Tahsildar who had ordered

the use of firepower to disperse the crowd in Therespuram at 3 p.m. on May 22, leading to the death of J. Jancy Rani, 37, and does not name officials who ordered firing at other locations.

The report was filed by Mr. Maheshwaran in response to a public interest litigation petition filed by a group of three lawyers seeking a detailed inquiry by the Thoothukudi Principal District Judge.

According to the AIG, it was the villagers of Ayyareddiyurani alias A. Kumareddiapuram led by the Anti-Sterlite Movement president Mahesh, who began a peaceful agitation from dawn to dusk, demanding the closure of the Sterlite Copper smelter owing to environmental concerns.

Plan to lay siege

Days before the agitations were to reach the 100th day on May 22, representatives of various organisations passed a resolution to lay siege to the Collectorate on that day. Immediately, revenue and police officials called for a peace meeting wherein it was agreed to hold peaceful protests.

On May 22, a huge crowd gathered near the Lady of Snow Church and it started proceeding towards the Collectorate. Similarly, villagers around the copper plant assembled at the Madathur junction and began marching towards the Collectorate. Around 20,000 people were present.

They indulged in “various violent activities and reached the Collectorate with a virulent face. Efforts to stop them at various places ended in vain. When they reached the Collectorate, the violent mob pelted stones, attacked police personnel and damaged police and public vehicles. All efforts to control and dispose [sic] the violent crowd failed,” the AIG said, and went on to state that a mob entered the residential quarters of Sterlite company employees adjacent to the Collectorate and set fire to a power generator and all vehicles parked in the apartments.

“The inmates, around 150 family members, were struggling for life. The mob in front of the Collectorate did not allow any fire engine or rescue team to enter the burning premises... As a last resort, to safeguard the lives of Collectorate staff, policemen and the 150 residents of Sterlite quarters, controlled use of fire [arms] was resorted to in and around the Collectorate

complex.

Estimate of loss

An Executive Engineer attached to the Public Works Department had assessed the damage caused to the Collectorate and allied government offices to be Rs. 28.12 lakh. Further, damage to vehicles, a police booth and a government liquor shop was assessed to be Rs. 15.67 crore.

Thereafter, at 1 p.m. on the same day, a mob of around 3,000 people moved towards the Food Corporation of India roundabout and started pelting stones. The rioters did not retreat despite the use of tear gas and lathicharge. They, instead, assaulted and attempted to kill policemen. This time again, the police opened fire leading to the death of M. Karthik, 20. At about 1.35 p.m., the retreating mob as well as a crowd from the other side attacked the policemen once again. Two government buses were burnt down. The police managed to disperse the mob through lathicharge, and another case of rioting was booked in connection with this incident. At around 3 p.m., Deputy Tahsildar Kannan issued orders for opening fire at Therespuram and it led to the death of one Rani. Further, three government-run liquor shops in Muthukrishnapuram, Ponnagaram and Sundaravelpuram were damaged during this bout of violence.

Property damaged

On May 23, a violent mob of around 1,000 people started rioting at Anna Nagar Main Road and damaged a liquor shop at Toovipuram, besides setting ablaze government properties around the area. The police opened fire once again killing S. Kaliappan, 22, of Mappillaiyurani.

The AIG also stated the then Superintendent of Police P. Mahendran (since transferred) also sustained injuries during the violence.

TAMIL NADU

Actor expresses regret



STAFF REPORTER

CHENNAI, JUNE 01, 2018 00:00 IST

Actor Rajinikanth expressed regret for his angry outburst while responding to a journalist over his comments on Thoothukudi incident in Chennai on Wednesday.

He was answering questions after returning from Thoothukudi.

In a tweet, Mr. Rajinikanth referred to a statement issued by the Madras Union of Journalists condemning his action and said, “Journalists seem to have felt that I spoke in a threatening manner, referring to them without respect. I regret using such words if it had hurt them.”

AIADMK hails statement

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, JUNE 01, 2018 00:00 IST

'He has spoken with conscience'

A day after actor Rajinikanth appeared to support the stand of Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami over the police firing in Thoothukudi, the ruling AIADMK mouthpiece Namadhu Puratchi Thalaivi Amma welcomed the former's statement.

In an article published on Thursday, the daily said that the actor had spoken with conscience. Mr. Rajinikanth had said that he believed that anti-social elements had infiltrated the anti-Sterlite protest march, leading to violence.

It welcomed Mr. Rajinikanth's statement that the resignation of the Chief Minister wouldn't be the solution. The article said that Mr. Rajinikanth statements (that continuous protests would turn Tamil Nadu into a graveyard) were a befitting reply to Communists and those who supporting protests every other time.

Meanwhile, during an interaction with reporters on Thursday, when asked about the statement of Mr. Rajinikanth, Fisheries Minister D. Jayakumar said as an individual person, the actor could say anything he wanted.

TAMIL NADU

Inquest to be held on June 2 and 3

STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 01, 2018 00:00 IST

A coalition of civil society organisations in Tamil Nadu, led by president of Thoothukudi Bar Association, A.W.D. Tilak, will hold an inquest into the firing on protesters during anti-Sterlite agitation, here on June 2 and 3.

According to a statement from the Bar Association on Thursday, the inquest will be held to ascertain facts that led to protests for 100 days.

It is aimed at ascertaining facts and circumstances of incidents which led to the police firing by gathering statements from eye witnesses, families of the deceased, officials of the district administration and the police.

Later, the team would disclose interim findings and observations on June 3.

TAMIL NADU

Sarathkumar consoles victims

STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 01, 2018 00:00 IST

It was unfortunate that actor Rajinikanth, who met victims of police firing during the anti-Sterlite agitation at the Government Medical College Hospital here, had branded protesters as 'anti-social elements,' R. Sarathkumar, president, All India Samaththuva Makkal Katchi, said here on Thursday.

Addressing the media after consoling families of victims in the hospital, he said Rajinikanth was supporting companies.

Death of 13 people during the protest was an irreparable loss. Prime Minister Narendra Modi too did not express his regret for the death of 13 people in Thoothukudi, he said.

Earlier, he met members of 13 families, who had lost their relatives in the firing, and expressed his grief over the loss. Besides, he gave away Rs. 50,000 to each of the deceased family, party sources said.

'Closure of Sterlite will affect industrial climate'



STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 01, 2018 00:00 IST

'Prospects of industries which depend on this unit are bleak'

The closure of Sterlite Copper has cast a shadow on the shipping industry, its ancillary and service industries.

In fact, the entire local economy has suffered a lot. Several stakeholders relying on export and import trade under the logistic support of seaport feel that the closure would affect industrial investments in this city.

Hundreds of workers depend directly and indirectly on this closed unit.

Industries were source of job opportunities but they should adhere to pollution control and other relevant norms, shipping industry leaders said here on Thursday.

The closure would affect prospects of seaport also. The cargo handling capacity of V. O. Chidambaranar Port would see a downtrend in the coming days.

Around one million tonnes of industrial cargo shipments were normally made

by Sterlite through the port.

The State government, which hosted the global investors' meet some years back, would be embarrassed, as the closure had sent a wrong signal. Further, the Madurai -Thoothukudi Industrial Corridor project, which remains a non-starter, would not take off.

Apart from logistics industry, a major ancillary of the shipping industry, stakeholders depending on chemical, minerals and housekeeping industries were left in the lurch. Normally, around 500 trucks would transport industrial cargo but the movement had come down to 100. Besides, the number of vessels calling at the port had shown a negative trend. At least six cargo vessels with around 1.35 lakh tonnes of import and export cargo would have reached the port in the last two months but none had come.

Terming the closure as a "setback for Thoothukudi," sources said bulk cargo traffic in merchant vessels was not up in recent weeks as imports of raw material, project cargo and technical items had come to naught. It was not an enterprising spell for industries, which were dependent on this closed unit, in need of sulphuric and phosphoric acid, sources added.

Importers, exporters bear the brunt of blackout

Container liners charge ₹7,000 per day for a 20-foot container and ₹10,000 a day for a 40-ft container that had attained temperature

S GODSON WISELY DASS
@Thoothukudi

THE May 22 police firing, the violence that followed, the clamping of Section 144 and the closure of Internet services have cost importers and exporters a lot, with adamant ship agents and container liners functioning in the port city levying indiscriminate penalties for the delay in moving containers that had achieved temperature during the period of unrest.

Ship agents and container liners had denounced the request of the Tuticorin Customs Brokers Association seeking a waiver of temperature charges for the unmoved containers, underlining the force majeure existing in the industrial town.

Importers and exporters have lost at least Rs 5-10 crore due to the unrest, claimed the Association's secretary R Sreedhar.

There are nearly 300 customs brokers who help the importers and exporters to get customs clearance (CC) and make arrangements for delivering the consignment. Also, there are 29 container liners of multinational companies, and their franchisees, operating in the district, supplying containers measuring 20 feet and 40 feet, for packing cargo for export and issuing delivery order (DO) for the import.

The liners avail 10 days' free period for the export containers. And for import containers, the free period may be either five days or 14 days, based on the volume and the type of the commodity.

Due to the unrest prevailing in Thoothukudi city after the

police firing at the Anti-Sterilite rallyists on May 22, the central government stopped Internet facility between May 23 and 27, and also extended the prohibitory order under Section 144 of CrPC, till 8 a.m. on May 27. The blackout of the Internet and the non-transportation of vehicles prevented the movement of container cargoes from the port terminals and Container Freight Stations (CFS) which led to the temperature of consignments.

Sources said that the container liners charge Rs 7,000 per day for a 20-foot container and Rs 10,000 a day for a 40-foot container that had attained tempera-

10 core
The Tuticorin Customs Brokers Association has claimed a loss of at least Rs 5-10 crore to the importers and exporters due to the unrest in Thoothukudi following the police firing

ture. According to Sreedhar, as all the bills should be filed online, the absence of the Internet facility had halted all work for one week.

The containers that had reached the VOC Port terminal after May 10 attained temperature during the unrest period, and the penalty levied on them would be at least Rs 5-10 crore.

The container liners have refused to waive off the temperature charges, considering the situation in Thoothukudi, Sreedhar said. The petitions requesting waiver of penalties to the Ship Agents' Association on behalf of the Tuticorin Customs

Brokers Association were not considered, he said, adding that the district administration should take steps to address their grievances.

A Sivakasi-based businessman, who is importing a machinery for his match industry, said that his customs bill clearance was delayed due to the riot and that he was charged Rs 10,000 a day.

An employee at the customs brokering office, requesting anonymity, said that the container liners authorities are being unrelenting in spite of being told about the situation prevailing in the city. The concerned importer and exporter will have to bear the penalty, and it will damage the reputation of the customs brokers, he added.

Another customs broker said that the regional head of an international container liner was contacted, and it is learnt that he did not forward the request petitions to the headquarters in Mumbai and at a foreign location.

It may be noted that the union shipping ministry had relaxed time limits for filing a Bill of Entry at the e-Commerce Portal of Central Board of Excise and Customs (ICEgate), since May 23; otherwise, it would have cost Rs 5000 more for each bill after two days of arrival of the cargo.

The customs brokers have sought the intervention of District Collector Sandeep Nanduri to get a waiver from the container liners. The Collector should at least recommend the Ministry of Logistics and Transport to take severe action against the rogue container liners, said Ahamad Jan, a customs broker.

Bodies of two police firing victims handed over to kin after re-postmortem

SCHOOLS TO REOPEN ON JUNE 1

Thoothukudi: Schools will reopen on June 1, on schedule and as per the directions of the State School Education Ministry, said District Collector Sandeep Nanduri, through a press statement. Nanduri said that the situation in Thoothukudi has been normal for the past five days, and that law and order is well under control. All the government buses have resumed operations and the shops in the commercial areas have returned to business as usual, the statement said. The public has returned to normal living, it said. The people had sought a week's delay for the reopening of schools, in view of the police firing

DEATH TOLL RISES TO 14

Tirunelveli: The death toll in anti-Sterilite protest in Thoothukudi has risen to 14 with the death of an elderly woman who was undergoing treatment at Tirunelveli Medical College Hospital here on Thursday. The deceased, Valliammal (63), of Meganapuram suffered burn injuries when a bus was set ablaze by protesters



Shanmugam's body being taken to his house at Masilamaninagar from the Thoothukudi medical college hospital on Thursday | EXPRESS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Nagercoil

THE bodies of Shanmugam and Selvasekar, victims of the police firing on May 22, were handed over to their respective families, on Thursday evening, after conducting a re-postmortem as directed by the Madras High Court.

Following court orders to conduct another post-mortem on seven of the deceased, including Snowlin Sahaya Venista, Shanmugam, Karthick, Kanthaiah, Kaliappan, Jeyaraman and Selvasekar, a re-postmortem was conducted in the presence of Dr Ambiga Prasad Batra from the Department of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, JIPMER, Dr Selvamurugan, Dr Manoharan and Judicial Magistrates, here, on Thursday.

The Madras High Court had

ordered preserving the bodies of the 13 victims until May 31, while hearing a petition filed by the father of one of the victims, S Baliah (father of Shanmugam), in order to ascertain whether the post-mortem had been performed in adherence with the guidelines of the Supreme Court.

By evening, the re-postmortem on two bodies had been completed. The relatives of Shanmugam received the body by 5.30 p.m. while Selvasekar's relatives did so by 7 p.m. Shanmugam's body was cremated at the corporation cremation ground after dusk, while Selvasekar's family laid him to rest at the panchayat burial ground, at around 8.10 p.m., said sources.

District Collector Sandeep Nanduri has given an exception for the autopsy to continue after 6 p.m., said an official.

'Legal battle will ensure permanent closure of Sterlite'

S KUMARESAN @Chennai

THE State government's job is not done just by passing an order to close down Sterlite's copper plant at Thoothukudi, says Vaiko, MDMK general secretary. Only by carefully fighting a legal battle against the company it will be ensured that the plant is not reopened, he told *Express* in free-wheeling chat on the issue.

The recent phase of the anti-Sterlite protest could be mostly a people-led one. But, Vaiko was one of the early political leaders to have started the protests against Sterlite plant and led a prolonged legal battle. Excerpts from his interview to *Express*:

Is it the first victory for the people against Sterlite?

No, before 1994, the Sterlite copper smelting plant valued about ₹300 crore was razed down by the people of Maharashtra even though they got the licence from the then Sharad Pawar-led Maharashtra government. Following the incident, Maharashtra government cancelled their licence. But, Sterlite didn't go to court to get back the government licence as they realised that the people of Maharashtra will not allow them to operate the plant. That's the victory of the Maharashtra people as they were fully aware about the impact of the plant. Likewise, people of Thoothukudi and Tamil Nadu are now aware of the plant's hazardous impact.

How was your experience of legal battle against Sterlite?

The plant had visibly violated two mandatory rules. Firstly the plant should be established 25 km away from the sea shore as various protected marine creatures and coral reefs exist in the area. Secondly, a green belt should be established in the premises of the plant at a width of 250 metres to protect the environment. But, the plant has been established at 15 km from the shore and the green belt had been set up for only a width of 25 metres. By these two visible violations and other environmental pollution, we got the closure order against the Sterlite in 2013. But, even though the Supreme Court accepted our argument, they permitted to operate the plant to fulfill the copper need of the country as the Sterlite made several intensive efforts to get a favourable order.



MDMK general secretary Vaiko at his residence in Anna Nagar on Tuesday | ASHWIN PRASATH

Did the State government support you when you were engaged in the legal battle?

Till 2012, December, the Tamil Nadu government pro-actively supported the operation of the Sterlite. But, they changed their tone after March, 29, 2013 when hundreds of Thoothukudi residents suffered suffocation and fainted due to leakage of toxic gas from Sterlite. Following which, the State government filed a writ petition against Sterlite, after I filed a petition. Now, the State government should carefully pursue the legal battle against the plant as the organisation will go to any extent to resume operation.

What would be the reaction of Thoothukudi people if they fail in legal battle?

The people of Thoothukudi will converge and dismantle the plant like how Maharashtra people did against the plant during the early 90s if the court fail to stop the operation of the plant permanently. This is what many people told me when I visited the victims on 22nd, when the police firing occurred, and 23rd morning. They said that they won't be thwarted by the shooting. The people of Thoothukudi are ready to brave the bullets. That's why I said that the plant would be dismantled by the people.

What do you think about concerns raised by industrialists over the shutting of the plant?

They are speaking about the sustainable development. We also agree with the concept of sustainable development. But, we differ with them on the question of at what cost? We must never agree to destroy our natural resources and livelihood in the name of development.



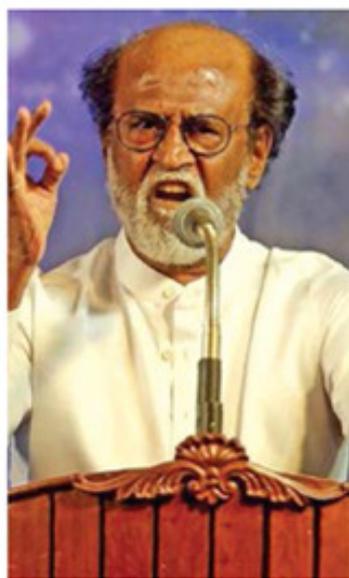
Rajinikanth regrets airport media row

S. THIRUNAVUKARASU
CHENNAI, MAY 31

Superstar Rajinikanth is faced with ferocious backlash to his Wednesday's chargesheet attributing the Thoothukudi violence to 'anti-socials' infiltrating what had hitherto been peaceful protest against Sterlite. Most of the political class in Tamil Nadu, apart from some social activists and even the public - particularly the left leaning - slamming him as being insensitive to people's struggle against a 'marauding corporate'.

There was some solace, though, as both the AIADMK and the BJP spoke up, rather forcefully, in support of the actor's 'bold' statement which they said was like a nail hit on the head. "Rajinikanth spoke with clear conscience when he said anti-socials had infiltrated the anti-Sterlite protest and that must be welcomed", said the AIADMK official organ 'Namadhu Pura-tchithalaivi Amma' in its Thursday morning edition.

BJP state president Dr Tamilsai Sounderarajan insisted that her party has been warning for long that anti-socials have infiltrated peaceful public demonstrations to destroy peace. "The Thoothukudi agitation turned violent only because of anti-socials infiltrating. The protesting public never had any intention to throw stones and torch vehicles. One only needs to examine the dimension and direction the protest took to understand clearly that anti-socials had taken charge", she said, adding, "And so, we (BJP) have been saying all along what Rajinikanth has now said". ■ P4



STALIN SLAMS ACTOR-POLITICO ON STERLITE SLUR

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, MAY 31

The opposition DMK and allies came down heavily against the actor, accusing him of insulting the Thoothukudi protesters by branding them as anti-socials.

"He sounded like the mouthpiece of the BJP and the AIADMK", said DMK working president M.K.Stalin. "Rajinikanth, being the superstar, should point out the anti-socials among those protesters. Let's wait and see if he will do this".

Referring to the star's statement that Tamil Nadu would "turn into a graveyard if people start fighting for everything", Stalin said, "None can say there should be no agitations as life itself is a battle. Nothing can be achieved without fighting and nothing was - be it the Independence struggle or the fight for Jallikattu".

Vaiko: Arrest Rajini under NSA

FROM P1

State Congress president Su.Thirunavukarasu said he had gone to Thoothukudi along with Stalin and other leaders on the day after the police firing.

“We found no anti-socials and extremists there. Rajinikanth might have spoken in that fashion based on the information he had received, but it’s not entirely true”, he said.

MDMK chief Vaiko wanted Rajinikanth to be “arrested under NSA unless he comes out with details of the anti-socials who had infiltrated in the protest”. VCK leader Thol. Thirumavalavan saw a wide conflict between actor Rajini in his films advocating fight to get justice and the real-life Rajini now saying agitations would destroy Tamil Nadu - he was obviously alluding to the superstar’s latest flick Kaala whose trailer featured a hit song ‘Poraduvom’ shot on Rajini with the robust lyrics exhorting people to join him to “fight for our children, for revolution”.

Twitter bursts out against Rajini, supports agitators

FROM P1

But, having commented about anti-socials taking over the stir against the copper smelter, Rajini had placed himself in the path of the agitators like Santosh who had taken this up as a cause a few years ago.

Injured on the march with police lathis raining blows on him, Santosh's bitterness personified the feelings of youth of the district too that had taken up cudgels against the polluting corporate.

Rajini did not exactly win friends and influence people with his perception of how the Sterlite agitation had lost course with professional mischief makers taking control.

What Rajini said was unlikely to be popular.

In a scene made more confusing by the interplay of politics, religion and corporate disregard of public health - one clear instance of gas leak in 2013 was suf-

Predictably, the social media was afire with the superstar traffic, many slamming him for his 'infiltration' assertion. Rajinikanth got just as much support from the twiterati and on the FB for his 'bold' nail on the head, for speaking out the truth without any political strings attached. Some of them also argued that he had not rubbished the entire crowd of genuine protesters at Thoothukudi but only had spoken of the anti-social elements from outside who had infiltrated to cause the havoc on May 22 morning. "He did not mention Tamil people as anti-social elements. He said anti-social elements are hijacking Tamil peoples good deed", tweeted Ashwin, one such supporter.

ficient to sustain the description - no one knows where the truth lies and fake news begins.

The bitter truth is 13 people died from police firing and the Twitterati were naturally incensed enough to be wholly on the side of the agitators. The Superstar can only smile and move on much as he did when tendering regret over his altercation with the media at the Chennai airport on the way back from the coast.

It took only a few hours for hashtags like #NaanThanPaRajinikanth and #AntiTamilRajinikanth to take pole position in the 15 minutes of fame everyone in the world is owed, as the late Andy Warhol said.

If Rajini did not know this already, the star who has played the anti-Establishment hero in many of his films and come out triumphant would have realised politics is a different world.

Fresh post-mortem on seven victims' bodies begins

M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 31

As per the Madras High Court order, fresh post-mortem on the bodies of seven of the 13 people killed in police firing in the protest against Sterlite, commenced at the Thoothukudi government medical college hospital on Thursday.

The court gave its ruling for re-post-mortem of the seven bodies that the police claimed to have done after getting proper consent from the relatives of the dead, as a petition was filed alleging tampering of evidences.

The bodies taken for re-post-mortem are of Selvasekar, Kandhaiah, Snowlin Venista, Kaliappan, Shanmugam, Tamilarasan and Karthik.

The re-post-mortem has been performed by two doctors from Thoothukudi government medical college hospital-Dr Manoharan and Dr Sudalaimuthu, both from the department of Forensic medicine in the presence of a specially appointed physician Dr Ambika Prasad Patra, department of Forensic science and Toxicology, Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER) Pondicherry.

Four judicial magistrates too have been appointed to monitor the re-post-mortem as has been directed by the High Court. And the entire process has been video-graphed, according to the hospital sources.

The body of 32-year-old Shanmugam of Masilamanipuram in Thoothukudi was handed over to his father, Balaiah, at around 5.10 pm and the re-post-mortem for the deceased Selvasekar commenced at 5.20 pm.

According to hospital sources the fresh post-mortem would continue all through the night so as to ensure the completion of the re-postmortem of the rest of the bodies and handed over them to their relatives by Friday (June 1).

‘SUPERSTAR’ POLITICIAN GETS A JOLT IN THOOTHUKUDI HOSP

R. MOHAN

CHENNAI, MAY 31

Rajinikanth may have showed great composure when a patient at the Thoothkudi hospital posed the question - "Who are you?" The actor smiled and said, "I am Rajinikanth". If the Superstar had not been aware of the feelings running in coastal Tamil Nadu over the Sterlite Copper plant, his meeting with K. Santosh Raj might have been a cruel lesson in reality.

The youth had showered similar bitterness on official visitors from the government in Information Minister Kadambur Raju and the Dy CM OPS. But none of that had Twitterati atwitter as the one concerning the actor Rajini. The topic was trending on Twitter as the enormity of the challenge to charisma sank in.

The trolling may have been a new experience too, although Rajini is already more than knee deep into the quagmire of Tamil Nadu politics. ■ **P4**

■ After Madras HC order on Thoothukudi tragedy

Fresh post-mortem on 7 victims bodies begins

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The body of 32-year-old

Shanmugam of Masilamanipuram in Thoothukudi was handed over to his father, Balaiah, at around 5.10 pm and the re-post-mortem for the deceased Selvasekar commenced at 5.20 pm. According to hospital sources the fresh post-mortem would continue all through the night so as to ensure the completion of the re-postmortem of the rest of the bodies and handed over them to their relatives by Friday (June 1).

In view of the performance of the re-post-mortem of the seven deceased, security has been beefed up in and around the Thoothukudi medical college hospital and the patients and their relatives were allowed after security checks. The police also used drones

for aerial surveillance around the government hospital area to check if miscreants created any problem in the name of funeral procession while taking the bodies of the deceased for the last rites.

Adhering to the Madras High court rulings, the officials strictly stated that the bodies of the deceased after the fresh post-mortem would be handed over only to their relatives.

The bodies of the six others killed-Jeyaraman, Jancy, Anthony Selvaraj, Glaston, Maniraj and Ranjith Kumar, however, are preserved in the mortuary until the High court's further orders. Post-mortem of these six bodies has not yet been performed as their relatives are yet to give their consent.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

CB-CID begins probe into riots, police firing

TNN | Jun 1, 2018, 12.33 AM IST



Personnel from the Crime Branch – Crime Investigation Division (CB-CID) have begun preliminary inquiries into the riots and police firing that claimed 13 lives in the city on May 22 and 23. Police sources said that the Thoothukudi District Police have registered cases against more than 16,500 people in five cases.

Cases were registered against the rioters and public under 15 sections, including 11 sections of the Indian Penal Code. It is learnt that SIPCOT Police had registered a case against 10,000 people. The South Police registered three cases against 6,000 persons while the North Police booked 500 people.

These case files were handed over to a team led by CB-CID superintendent of police Praveen Kumar. On Thursday the team also retrieved CCTV footages recorded at the collectorate, ATMs and commercial establishments and in the centralised CCTV surveillance control room at the South Police Station.

Sources said that they will begin a full-fledged inquiry after the bodies of the 13 victims who got killed in the incident are handed over to their families. The team comprising inspectors from across the state also plan to conduct inquiries with the public to get a clear picture of the protests and the riots that followed.

Superintendent of Police (SP), of Thoothukudi District, Murali Rambha said that there were no major incidents of violence in the city from May 24. "Normalcy has returned to the city. There were not even stone pelting incidents in the city since then. There were stray incidents in the outskirts," he said and added that focus was to ensure peaceful handing over bodies of victims to

their kin at the earliest.

District Collector Sandeep Nanduri said that schools will reopen on Friday as usual as normalcy has returned. He also said that there has been no official communication on the arrival of the one-man commission or the national human rights commission to probe the incidents that took place on May 22 and 23. "We are ready to assist to them," he added.

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

3 more families refuse to receive bodies

TNN | Jun 1, 2018, 12.33 AM IST



Families of three more persons who were killed in the police firing and assault on May 22 and 23 refused to receive bodies of their dear ones. While six families have already moved the court and refused to extend cooperation for the first postmortem, a second post-mortem was performed on the seven bodies on Thursday.

The relatives of three of the families have refused to receive the bodies. "Sterlite should be demolished and a memorial should be built for the 13 victims there, as they died for closure of that polluting plant. We will not receive the bodies till then," said the aunt of Snowlin, one of the victims.

Relatives of Tamilarasan and Kaliappan also refused to receive the bodies. They demanded that the policemen in the firing squad, the officials who

gave orders for the police firing and the then collector and superintendent of police be booked for murder. "We will not receive the bodies till then," said an agitated Muthupandi, brother of Kaliappan.

Families who refused to receive the bodies also said that they don't trust the second postmortem and that they were under pressure from the government and the police to receive the bodies. Meanwhile, the kin of Shanmugam of Masilamanipuram and Selvasekar of Peikulam received their bodies and performed the final rites. The family of Karthik received a relief for Rs 20 lakh from the district collector on Thursday.

The bodies of Selvasekar and Karthik are likely to be handed over to the kin on Friday morning. Based on the Madras high court direction, Ambika Prasad Patra from JIPMER, and two doctors from the Thoothukudi MCH performed the postmortem.

There was heavy police deployment at the MCH and en route to their houses. Drone was also used to monitor the situation to avert any untoward incident during the processions and final rites.

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Blow after blow for Sterlite employees

TNN | Jun 1, 2018, 12.32 AM IST



With the state government sealing the Sterlite plant in Tuticorin last week, the future of the nearly 3,000 direct and contract employees of Sterlite and the nearly 20,000 members of their families who are indirectly having a livelihood depending on the copper plant is at stake. Adding to the woes is the mental agony of being bracketed with 'anti-social elements' by the local people.

"For the last three weeks people in my neighbourhood have been looking at me mockingly telling each other that I am a Sterlite employee. Some have asked me fiercely why I work for that company. Now they happily say that the plant has been closed down and our families will suffer,"

Saraswathy, an accounts department staff with Sterlite, said.

She said her husband is running a small business and that her earning is the backbone of her family's survival. "My son is an engineering student. Now that the plant has been closed down, we will have no other go," she said, hoping that the government would reopen the plant.

Sealing the plant has come as a shock for the 900-odd permanent employees of the plant. A senior employee in the mechanical department for 23 years said there are at least 100 permanent employees who have been working there for more than 20 years. "We don't have cancer. Rumours about the plant were spread on social media and the government has acted due to pressure without conducting a scientific study," he added.

"Relatives are asking us what would happen to our jobs," said Karthik who was in the Sterlite quarters when it was ransacked by a mob on May 22. Recalling the dreadful incident, he said the families were trembling with fear when the mob attacked their

vehicles and set them ablaze. "Women and children were in tears and ran to the terrace as a cloud of smoke from our burning vehicles engulfed our houses," he said. He said the protesters were threatening to kill them if they came down. "What wrong did we do to attract such a fury? We are praying that the Tamil Nadu government will reopen the factory. We are hopeful that the company will not abandon us and are awaiting a message from our bosses," he added.

The condition of the nearly 2,500 contract labourers is worse as they are clueless on what to do and how to pay the school fees of their children. Most of them are living in villages close to the factory. Thoothukudi Sterlite All Contractors Welfare Association president S Thiagarajan told TOI that there are around 40 contractors attached to the association having 1,500 to 2,000 contract labourers depending on them. "Our employees work on contracts ranging from one year to three years depending on the nature of the work. Half of these labourers are from areas around the factory, including a few places from where people are protesting against the plant. Areas from where they came to work include Therespuram, Silverpuram, Pandarampatti, Kumarattiyapuram, Ottapidaram, Sawyerpuram and Athimarampatti," he said.

Sources said that around 500 employees are from northern states. It is learnt that many of them have gone back as there is uncertainty over the plant starting operations. Thiagarajan said the employees are asking for loans to pay the education fees of their children and urgent medical expenses.

"Payment to the tune of more than Rs 20 crore from Sterlite is pending for the contractors. Many trucks and heavy machines we have hired are also on the sealed premises of the plant. We pray that the dues are settled and vehicles released at the earliest. In the long run, we want the plant to commence operations," he adds.

NHRC team to begin investigation on Sunday

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 02, 2018 00:00 IST

Forum to conduct public hearing on police firing today

The National Human Rights Commission's fact-finding team is expected to start on Sunday its probe into the killing of 13 persons in the police firing during the anti-Sterlite protest that turned violent in Thoothukudi on May 22.

The fact-finding team, comprising a Senior Superintendent of Police, three Deputy Superintendents of Police and an Inspector, is likely to land here on Saturday evening and commence its probe on Sunday.

The team, which is likely to camp at Thoothukudi till June 7, is expected to meet the family members of the victims, witnesses and those who volunteer to depose before submitting its report within two weeks.

Meanwhile, the People's Coordination Committee Against Thoothukudi Police Firing has proposed to organise public hearing on the police firing at Bell Hotel between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. on Saturday (June 2).

“The public hearing is organised with the objective of bringing out the truth behind the police firing.

Retired judges, former police officials, educationists, senior advocates and journalists will conduct the public hearing in which relatives of the victims and those who witnessed the police firing and other unfortunate incidents may appear before the panel,” Henry Tiphagne of People's Watch told reporters here on Friday .

After the public hearing, the team will visit the affected families and the police officers before preparing its report.

TAMIL NADU

SC panel to visit Thoothukudi



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

SALEM, JUNE 02, 2018 00:00 IST

The National Commission for Scheduled Castes will soon visit Thoothukudi to ascertain the death of the people belonging to the Adi Dravida community during anti-Sterlite protests and police action and the loss of property suffered by them, said L. Murugan, its Vice-Chairman.

Speaking to press persons on the sidelines of the review meeting on the progress of the development and welfare schemes for the benefit of the Adi Dravidas at the Collectorate here on Friday, Mr. Murugan said that the commission sent a notice to the Director General of Police and the Chief Secretary on the loss of lives of the Adi Dravidas in the police action.

According to the DGP's reply, four Adi Dravida community people were killed in the police firing incident.

The commission will make a visit to Thoothukudi to personally ascertain the situation, to make enquiries with the injured and the loss caused to the Adi Dravida community people.

Mr. Murugan said that the commission has taken special initiative for a speedy trial in the recent violence on the Adi Dravida community people at Kachanatham village in Sivaganga district and punish all the guilty without any delay.

He said that there is an urgent need for preventing the recurrence of Kachanatham violence. The commission has planned to write to the Collectors of all the districts to hold meeting of representatives of various castes once a month to sort out differences, if any among them. Identifying and nipping the trouble in the bud itself will go a long way in maintaining in caste amity, he said.

Mr. Murugan said that on the suggestion made by the commission, the State government has allotted Rs. 100 crore for the creation of basic infrastructure facilities and development of the Adi Dravidar villages. Tamil Nadu is a forerunner in this regard and has set a worthy example.

The National Commission for Scheduled Castes has commended the State government for the same and has sent a letter thanking the Chief Minister for the allocation.

He said a large number of panjami and disposed class lands have been encroached upon by more than 900 people with vested interests in Salem district. The commission has directed the official machinery to issue notices to all the people and take steps to retrieve the entire land. The same may be given to landless people.

He said that Salem district has excelled in successfully implementing seven major schemes for the benefit of the Adi Dravidas.

Rohini R. Bhajibakare, District Collector, K. Shankar, Commissioner of Police, Georgy George, Superintendent of Police, A. Periasamy, District Forest Officer, and other officers participated in the meeting.

TODAY'S PAPER

Protests hit garment shipments through Thoothukudi

M. Soundariya Preetha

COIMBATORE, JUNE 02, 2018 00:00 IST

The suspension of internet services for five days in Thoothukudi last month has led to backlog of consignments affecting shipping of garments from Tirupur through the VOC Port.

Nearly 80 % of garments exported from Tirupur are shipped through the Thoothukudi port. Though Thoothukudi is returning to normalcy, goods already at the port are getting cleared only now.

“Even now clearances are taking time. Though clearances have resumed at the port, the goods stranded have just started moving. There is over congestion at the port,” said Raja Shanmugham, president of Tirupur Exporters’ Association.

Forwarding agents here say for almost five days shipments from the port were affected badly. Since internet connections were down, the exporters were unable to get clearances.

An official at the port said that for a couple of days, when internet services were disrupted at Thoothukudi, exporters and importers were unable to upload documents. This affected movement of goods too. However, the disruption in services was just for a day or two. The situation has returned to normalcy now, the official said.

The official added that the annual import revenue for the port was Rs. 4,400 crore. Of it, Rs. 1,300 crore was from Sterlite Copper that imported copper ore.

Since the plant is closed, there would be no imports this year.

In April, the company had paid Rs. 50 crore for imports. Similarly, copper anodes from Sterlite were a major exports through the port. These exports would also not be there this year, the official said.

TAMIL NADU

Parties welcome call for impartial probe

T.K. Rohit

CHENNAI, JUNE 02, 2018 00:00 IST

Political parties on Friday welcomed the condemnation by UN experts of the police action during the anti-Sterlite protest in Thoothukudi, in which 13 people were killed, as well as their call for an independent probe into the incident.

“Whenever human rights are violated and people are brutally murdered, the UN Human Rights Council, and particularly the UN Working Group on human rights and transnational organisations, take up such issues. The Indian government and the Tamil Nadu government are now duty-bound to punish the guilty,” MDMK general secretary Vaiko told The Hindu.

Expressing elation over the UN taking note of crimes committed against Tamils, he said, “Now (when it comes to) any injustice done to Tamils anywhere in the world, the guilty cannot escape. The Sterlite killings were cold-blooded, pre-planned murders [carried out] to appease Sterlite at the behest of the State and Central governments.”

“This statement [by the UN body] substantiates the charges levelled by the DMK that the police firing was excessive, unwarranted and disproportionate. Therefore, the moral mandate of this AIADMK government is destroyed, and the Chief Minister must take full responsibility and tender his resignation. Now that international agencies have taken note [of the incident], we hope that the Prime Minister will also follow suit,” DMK spokesperson Manuraj Shunmugasundaram said.

CBI probe sought

The VCK demanded a CBI probe into the killings. “Although the National Human Rights Commission has already taken up the matter, the condemnation by the UN Working Group will exert more pressure [on the authorities],” VCK general secretary Ravi Kumar said.

He said the killings during the anti-Sterlite protests had dented India’s image.

UN working group condemns police action in Thoothukudi



Vidya Ram

LONDON, JUNE 02, 2018 00:00 IST

Describes the firing as excessive use of lethal force; calls for independent probe

UN human rights experts have condemned the “disproportionate and excessive use of lethal force” by the Tamil Nadu police against anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi, and have called for an independent investigation to ensure that those who had violated human rights were brought to justice. They have also called on Sterlite Industries and Vedanta Resources [the parent company] to take “immediate action” to mitigate pollution and ensure access to safe water and healthcare for residents.

“The government should uphold the rights to freedom of expression and assembly, as they are the cornerstone of democratic societies and a critical tool to identify and protect against business-related human rights abuses,” said the group, led by Anita Ramasastry, chair of the UN Working Group on human

rights and transnational organisations.

The group expressed concern over the use of force, including live ammunition, against protesters [who were] “marching to raise legitimate human rights and environmental concerns,” and pointed to documentation from judicial and administrative bodies of water contamination, air pollution and other forms of environmental degradation linked to the Sterlite Copper plant.

“Under the UN’s Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, all business enterprises have a responsibility to respect human rights, including identifying, preventing, mitigating and accounting for how they address their adverse human rights impact,” they said.

The working group has been in place since 2011 to promote and disseminate the UN’s Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

The UN experts are the latest international voices to raise concerns about the events that unfolded on May 22. Human rights NGOs have also raised concerns about the handling of the protests. Amnesty International said the Tamil Nadu government had been “shockingly underprepared” to peacefully control what was expected to be a massive protest.

Human Rights Watch has called for a “prompt, impartial and transparent investigation.”

Call to delist

In London, where Vedanta Resources is headquartered and listed on the stock exchange, the main Opposition Labour Party has described the firm as a “rogue” corporation and called for its delisting from the London Stock Exchange (LSE) to remove the “cloak of respectability” from the firm. Several demonstrations have taken place outside the Indian High Commission in London as well as Vedanta founder and chairman Anil Agarwal’s home.

A public petition on the British Parliament’s e-petition website, calling for the UK authorities to investigate and ban the company from the stock exchange, was rejected on the grounds that the responsibility for listing companies lay with the LSE.

The LSE has thus far declined to comment on the calls to delist Vedanta Resources.

Five bodies handed over to relatives

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 02, 2018 00:00 IST

After re-post-mortem conducted by a team of doctors as instructed by the Madras High Court, five bodies have been handed over to their relatives so far while the relatives of two deceased refused to accept the bodies.

The bodies of 13 victims who were killed in police firing and the lathi charge in Thoothukudi during the anti-Sterlite protest organised on May 22 and subsequently, the next day, were kept in the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital morgue. Of this, post-mortem of the bodies of Shanmugam (38), Selvasekar (42), Karthik (20), Kanthiah (58), Kaliappan (22), Snowlin (17) and Thamizharasan (42) were conducted immediately after the violence.

As the Madras High Court directed the State government to conduct re-post-mortem of these seven bodies by doctors from either JIPMER or Thiruvananthapuram Government Medical College Hospital, doctors from JIPMER, with the assistance of doctors attached to the TMCH, started the re-post-mortem on Thursday afternoon. The exercise went on till 2 a.m.

Subsequently, relatives of Shanmugam, Selvasekar and Karthik received the bodies in the night and the bodies of Kaliappan and Kanthiah were handed over on Friday even as relatives of Snowlin and Thamizharasan refused to receive the bodies.

They said the State government should adopt a resolution in the Assembly ensuring the permanent closure of Sterlite Copper and its subsequent dismantling from Thoothukudi. Besides taking appropriate action against the policemen, all the cases registered against the protestors should be withdrawn.

However, the officials are persuading them to accept the bodies.

During an informal chat with reporters, Collector Sandeep Nanduri said post-mortem of the remaining six bodies, which are being kept at TMCH, would be conducted as per the directions of the Madras High Court.

The compensation of Rs. 20 lakh had been given to the families of two

deceased and the cheques to the families of other deceased would be given shortly.

Mr. Sandeep said normalcy had returned in the town and hence all the schools had re-opened after the summer vacation on Friday.

National Commission for SC to visit Thoothukudi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

SALEM, JUNE 02, 2018 00:00 IST

“Need for preventing recurrence of Kachanatham violence”

The National Commission for Scheduled Castes will soon visit Thoothukudi to ascertain the death of people belonging to Adi Dravidar community during the anti-Sterlite protests and police action and loss of property suffered by them, said L. Murugan, its Vice-Chairman.

Speaking to press persons on the sidelines of a meeting to review development and welfare schemes for the benefit of Adi Dravidars at the Collectorate here on Friday, he said that the Commission had sent a notice to the Director General of Police (DGP) and the Chief Secretary on the death of Adi Dravidars in police action.

According to the reply from the Director General of Police, four Adi Dravidar people were killed in the police firing.

Mr. Murugan said that the Commission had taken a special initiative for speedy trial in the recent violence on Adi Dravidars in Kachanatham village of Sivaganga district and to punish all the guilty without any delay.

He said that there was an urgent need for preventing the recurrence of Kachanatham violence.

The Commission had planned to write to the Collectors of all districts to hold a meeting of representatives of various castes once a month to sort out differences, if any, among them.

Identifying and nipping the trouble in the bud itself would go a long way in maintaining amity, he said.

Rs. 100 crore allotted

Mr. Murugan said that on the suggestion made by the Commission the State government had allotted Rs. 100 crore for the creation of basic infrastructure

and development of Adi Dravidar villages.

Tamil Nadu was a forerunner in this regard and had set a worthy example.

The National Commission for Scheduled Castes commended the State government and had sent a letter thanking the Chief Minister for the allocation.

According to a reply from DGP to a notice, four Adi Dravidar people were killed in the police firing

L. Murugan

NCSC Vice-Chairman

Youth who questioned Rajini clarifies

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MADURAI, JUNE 02, 2018 00:00 IST

Says media and trolls twisted the video clip of the incident to suit their agenda

Barely 48 hours after he embarrassed actor Rajinikanth asking, “Who are you?” that forced the actor to introduce himself, “I am Rajinikanth”, the Thoothukudi youth, K. Santhosh Raj, a victim of police action during the anti-Sterlite protests, clarified that his intention was misconstrued.

In a video clip released on social media, the B.Com. graduate claimed: “My question to him (Rajinikanth) was posed as a matter of right to someone who was entering politics to serve the people.”

When Mr. Rajinikanth visited the injured being treatment at the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital on Wednesday, Mr. Raj stunned everyone around, including the actor by asking him, “Who are you?” When the actor introduced himself saying, “I am Rajinikanth,” the youth without blinking asked him why it took so many days for him to visit the anti-Sterlite agitators who had been protesting continuously for 100 days.

Soon, the video of this incident went viral on social media with the hash tag #NaandhaanpaRajinikath (I am Rajinikanth) trending on Twitter for several hours.

Mr. Raj Kumar of Pandarampatti on Friday clarified that the media and trolls twisted the video clip of the incident to suit their requirement.

“While politicians draw their respect from the power they hold, it is not the case with Mr. Rajinikanth,” the youth who sustained bleeding injuries on his head during lathicharge, said adding, “Even if he does not hold an office of power, the very word Rajini fetches him respect.

“My question was with a heavy heart as had Mr. Rajinikanth extended his support to our anti-Sterlite protest, it could have been a big force multiplier.”

But, due to the “twist” given to the incident, it would have an adverse impact on him as an individual, he said.

My question to him was posed as a matter of right to someone who was entering politics to serve the peopleK. Santhosh Raj

Thoothukudi firing: police told not to harass people during probe

STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, JUNE 02, 2018 00:00 IST

HC asks State to file affidavit on procedures followed to disperse crowd

Disposing of a petition on the recent Thoothukudi riot that claimed 13 lives, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Friday directed the police to follow guidelines in accordance with law during investigation.

A Division Bench of Justices M. V. Muralidaran and T. Krishnavalli also directed the police not to harass people remanded for inquiry or their family members in the name of investigation.

Standing orders

The petitioner, C. Thangapandi of Tirunelveli, said the police had filed several false cases against protesters and taken people into custody illegally. The police also resorted to surveillance on the people of the region, he claimed. He alleged that Police Standing Orders were not followed and the police directly opened fire against the people protesting against Sterlite Copper.

The court heard two other petitions which sought a judicial probe and adequate compensation for victims. The petitioners claimed that as per the Police Standing Orders, they should use tear gas, water jets and lathicharge to disperse a mob before opening fire. Firing should be an option only if the other means failed. But the police purposefully aimed at the protesters and gunned them down, they said.

The court asked the State to file an affidavit on the procedures followed, if they were in consonance with the Police Standing Orders. The petitions were posted for hearing on June 6.

Thoothukudi firing: CPI(M) for SIT probe

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

TIRUCHI, JUNE 02, 2018 00:00 IST

'All cases registered against protesters should be withdrawn'

The human rights wing of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), Tamil Nadu State Committee, has called for a High Court-monitored probe by a special investigation team into the firing against anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi.

It also called for suspension of the government and police officers who ordered the firing and registration of cases against them on the charge of murder. All cases registered against protesters should be withdrawn and the injured should be extended free and quality health care. The government should ensure that the education of school and college students was not disrupted due to the agitation, it demanded.

Releasing a report of a fact-finding visit undertaken by the Human Rights Protection Committee of the party to Thoothukudi at a press conference here on Friday, G. Selva, coordinator of the committee, and U. Vasuki, CPI (M) Central Committee Member, expressed lack of faith on the probe by CB-CID and the commission of inquiry headed by former High Court Judge Aruna Jagadeesan. The committee, in its report, also demanded that the government take over the land where the Sterlite copper smelter factory is located. Sterlite should also be made to pay compensation for the environmental damages caused by the factory. Blaming the pro-corporate policies of the State and Central governments for the imbroglio, Ms. Vasuki wondered why the District Collector failed to visit the protesters during their agitation for 99 days. Even on the day of firing, the Collector was away attending a jamabanthi. His whereabouts after the jamabanthi should be publicised, she demanded.

Many families including the family of J. Snowlin, one of the victims, had participated in the protest along with their children. They had even carried food and this shows that they were prepared for a prolonged stir but had no plans to indulge in violence, Ms. Vasuki contended and alleged that the FIRs filed were full of falsity.

Committee to hear grievances of firing victims

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Thoothukudi

A coalition of civil society organisations will organise a Coordinating Committee for People's Inquest into Thoothukudi Police Firing, towards gathering public opinion, hearing grievances, analysing facts and collecting evidences on the May 22 police firing, for two days, from June 2, said Henri Tiphagne, Executive Director,

People's Watch.

As many as 14 protestors were killed and more than a hundred severely injured when police opened fire at the protesters rallying against the Sterlite Copper plant, on May 22, the 100th day of the protest, and in

Coordinating Committee for People's Inquest

The coalition of civil society comprising 24 members including retired bureaucrats, judges, lawyers, rights activists, fishermen leaders and press persons will hold a two-day meet from June 2

the post-gunfire violence.

The Committee will comprise 24 members including retired bureaucrats, judges, lawyers, human rights activists, fishermen leaders and press persons. The People's Inquest will help to bring out the truth

of the incident and the subsequent violence to the notice of the human rights. Ad-Hoc Committee, Thoothukudi Bar Association president AWD Tilak is the convenor of the programme.

The main objective of the Inquest is to ascertain the facts that led to the protests against Sterlite, particularly in the last 100 days and to gather statements from eye-witnesses, protesters and the police.



UN Human Rights experts flay police firing in Thoothukudi

Vaiko condemns 'illegal arrest' of team

Chennai: Condemning the 'illegal arrest' of eight members of Puratchikara Ilaingar Munnani by Thoothukudi police when they were involved in fact-finding activities among the victims of police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters, MDMK general secretary Vaiko has demanded their immediate release. In a press release, he said the eight went to Thoothukudi for getting ground level information regarding the police action. They were illegally arrested on Thursday night and detained at a secret place

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

THE killing of 14 anti-Sterlite protesters in police firing at Thoothukudi echoed in the United Nations with UN Human Rights experts condemning the use of lethal force against agitators who were demanding closure of the copper smelter plant due to health and environmental concerns.

Expressing concern over the apparent "disproportionate and excessive" use of force, including use of live ammunition, against protesters demanding legitimate human rights and environmental concerns, United Nation Human Rights experts, in a statement in the website, called on Indian authorities to carry out an independent and transparent investigation, without delay, and to ensure that perpetrators of violations be held accountable.

Urging the Government of India to take all necessary measures to ensure that all business

enterprises respect national as well as international human rights and environmental norms, the experts said Sterlite Copper's smelting plant should resume operations only after meaningful consultations with affected communities and fully comply with environmental laws.

Hitting out at Sterlite Copper as well as its parent company, Vedanta Resources, the experts said that local and national judicial and administrative bodies have documented water contamination, air pollution and other forms of environmental degradation linked to the copper smelting plant and related activities.

"Under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, all business enterprises have a responsibility to respect human rights," the experts said, calling on Sterlite Copper as well as its parent company, Vedanta Resources, to take immediate measures to mitigate pollution and to ensure access to safe water and health care.



2 bodies of firing victims handed to kin

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Thoothukudi

AUTHORITIES on Friday handed over the bodies of two more persons who were killed in the police firing against anti-Sterlite protesters. Relatives of the two deceased, Kaliappan and Kanthaia, received the bodies in the morning and buried them. The police had beefed up security in the city in view of the funerals.

On Thursday, the hospital authorities had handed over three bodies to their relatives. The family of Shanmugam and Selvasekar received the body earlier while parents of Karthick received the body at 9 pm.

Collector Sandeep Nanduri said that the autopsy was videographed and lasted till 2 am, he said. Over five bodies have so far been given while negotiations are on with the families Snowlin of Mathakovil and Thamilarasan of Kurukusalai who had refused to budge. They have demanded permanent closure of Sterlite plant.



Eight Thoothukudi fact-finders detained secretly: Vaiko

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

CONDEMNING the “illegal arrest” of eight members of the Puratchi-kara Ilaigar Munnani who were involved in fact-finding activities among the victims of the police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters, MDMK general secretary Vaiko demanded their immediate release.

He said the eight had gone to Thoothukudi for getting ground-

level information regarding the police action on May 22. They were arrested on Thursday night and detained at a secret place. It is the duty of police to inform the family members of the arrested persons. The arrested should be permitted to contact their advocates, he said.

Midnight arrests flayed

In another development, the CPM

urged the State government to take decisive steps to bring normalcy in Thoothukudi instead of creating a flutter among the residents of the district by arresting youths in connection with the 100th day protest against the Sterlite Copper.

The party also condemned the arrest of former MLA T Velmurugan, president of the Tamilaga Valvurimai Katchi, under the National Security Act. He should be released

immediately as he had been arrested to take revenge on him, the committee said.

K Balakrishnan, State secretary of the CPM, alleged that the police were continuously arresting several youths and activists at midnight in connection with the protest. The party urged the government, district administration and police to take decisive steps to stop the midnight arrests.

INDIAN EXPRESS

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Police should stop searching for youth, says Kisan Sabha leader

AKS general secretary Hannan Mollah visits victims of police firing in Thoothukudi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Thoothukudi

IT will be difficult for the tension prevailing in Thoothukudi to ease off completely, unless the search for youth by the police is stopped, said CPIM affiliated All India Kisan Sabha General Secretary Hannan Mollah, after visiting gunfire victims at the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital (ThMCH) here, on Friday.

Mollah visited the houses of Karthi, Snowlin and Jancy, who were shot dead during the police firing, to express condolence. He also met the patients severely injured, at the ThMCH.

Mollah told reporters that people have been protesting against the copper smelter plant for the past 20 years, claiming there was air and ground water pollution. "Nevertheless, the killing of 13 protesters participating in a peaceful rally was barbaric," he said.

The former MP said that standing order rules had been violated grossly by the police as many of the injured and deceased had sustained



A file photo of the anti-Sterlite protests | EXPRESS

injuries above the waist. He also questioned why the government did not hold any dialogue with the protesters after February 12. He held the state government and the owner of Sterlite responsible for loss of lives of innocents in the police firing.

The eight-time MP of Uluberia constituency of West Bengal, demanded a probe by a sitting judge into the case. "Besides, Rs 1 crore should be given to the families of the deceased and officials responsible for the shooting should be booked under Section 302 of the IPC," he added.

Unless the state withdraws the police, stops searching for

youths, and withdraws false cases, there will no real ease. The police should not threaten or intimidate the families who have lost their kin, said Mollah.

Farmers across the country have been protesting in every state as the government has violated the law and handed over land to corporates, Mollah said. The Gujarat government has been trying to hand over agriculture land to a lignite mining plant, and farmers have launched a widespread protest, he added.

CPIM State Farmers Wing Secretary Shanmugam said that actor Rajinikanth's anti-social comment at the anti-Sterlite protesters seem to be the voice of Vedanta.

Port Trust condoles death of 13 civilians

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Thoothukudi

THE Trustees of the VO Chidambaranar Port Trust Board passed a resolution condoling the killing of civilians in the police firing on Anti-Sterlite protesters here, at the board meeting held here on Friday. The loss of business traffic incurred for the port in the wake of closure of Sterlite Copper unit was discussed in the presence of the trustees. However, alternate cargo shipment has been planned to balance the loss, said the official sources.

The VOC Port Trust Board has 17 trustees. The board meeting was presided over by Chairman I Jayakumar.

The Trustees observed that five percent of the total business volume would be affected due to the closure of the copper plant which was doing a business of 2.4 million tonne of cargo, on an average, every year.

It amounts to an approximate loss of Rs 30 crore per year. To balance the business volume and to increase the traffic, the board has recommended that the port management moves to alternate cargo.

The VOC Port handled 36.58 million tonnes of cargo during the fiscal 2017-18, which had dropped from 38.46 million tonnes during the previous fiscal, due to the reduced arrival of coal for thermal plants. The closure of Sterlite Copper will only make it worse.

2 more bodies handed over to families

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Thoothukudi

THE authorities on Friday handed over the bodies of two more persons who were killed in the police firing against anti-Sterlite protesters here. The relatives of the two deceased, Kaliappan and Kanthaia, received the bodies in the morning and buried them. The police had beefed up the security in the city in view of the

funerals.

On Thursday, the hospital authorities had handed over three bodies to their relatives. The family of Shanmugam and Selvasekar received the body earlier while the parents of Karthick received the body at 9 pm.

In a press statement, Collector Sandeep Nanduri said that the re-postmortem for the bodies was performed in the presence of designated officers as

per the court direction. The autopsy was video-graphed and lasted till 2 am, he said.

Over five bodies have so far been handed over to the families while negotiations are on with the families Snowlin of Mathakovil and Thamilarasan of Kurukusalai who had refused to budge, the collector added. The relatives of Snowlin and Thamilarasan are denying to receive the bodies until their demands were met.



UN human rights expert panel condemns police firing

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 1

The United Nations experts have condemned the apparent excessive and disproportionate use of lethal force by police against protesters calling for the closure of a copper smelting plant in the Thoothukudi over health and environmental concerns.

The plant is run by Sterlite Copper, a unit of Vedanta Ltd, a sub-

siary of the UK-based company, Vedanta Resources, owned by Anil Agarwal.

A press release issued by office of the High Commissioner of the United Nations Human Rights, Geneva in Switzerland stated that police opened fire on thousands of protesters on 22 May, killing 13 people and injuring dozens of others marching against the expansion of the heavily polluting cop-

per smelter in Thoothukudi.

The UN experts are part of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council.

The experts said “we are extremely concerned by the apparent disproportionate and excessive use of force, including the use of live ammunition, against protesters marching to raise legitimate human rights and environmental concerns”.

No secret deal on Sterlite issue, says Kanimozhi

DC CORRESPONDENT

TIRUCHY/ARIYALUR, JUNE 1

The DMK women's wing state secretary and Rajya Sabha member Ms. Kanimozhi has refuted the BJP senior leader and Union minister of state for Shipping and Transport Pon Radhakrishnan's charge that there is a 'secret understanding' between AIADMK and DMK over the Sterlite issue.

She told media persons at Tiruchy airport on Friday, that there was no necessity for the DMK to do politics by having a secret deal with AIADMK.

Justifying the opposition DMK boycotting the ongoing session of the Tamil Nadu Assembly, she said



the present session "is not up to the level expected of the Legislature."

To a question whether Mr. Karunanidhi if in good health would have attend the current Assembly session, she replied that Mr. Stalin, the leader of the

opposition, also used to attend the session regularly.

But Mr. Stalin now did not like the manner in which the proceedings were conducted and hence the DMK under his leadership has decided to stay away from the House, Kanimozhi added.

Meanwhile, In Ariyalur, the TNCC president, said at Ariylaur that the outcome of the recent by-elections in the country indicated that the Prime Minister Modi wave "is gone" and things are turning around for Congress led by Rahul Gandhi. He also took strong exception to Mr. Pon. Radhakrishnan's remarks that anti-socials have infiltrated into Tamil Nadu.

■ CPM releases fact-find report on Thoothukudi firing 'Police attitude unhelpful to help normalcy return'

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC
TIRUCHY, JUNE 1

Expressing shock and deep pain at the police firing against anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi last week, the CPI(M) central committee member Ms. U. Vasuki on Friday sounded skeptical on the outcome of the Commission of Inquiry by a retired Judge, appointed by the State government into the incidents. A High court monitored special committee should be appointed to probe into the details of the police firing, she urged.

Speaking to the press here after releasing the CPI(M)'s fact finding committee's report on the unfortunate Thoothukudi incidents, Ms. Vasuki and G.Selva, convenor of the fact finding team of the party, said that the erring Revenue and police officials who have ordered firing should be



CPI(M) Central committee member Ms.U.Vasuki and G.Selva, convenor of fact finding team of the party release their spot study report on the Thoothukudi police firing at Tiruchy on Friday. —DC

suspended immediately, besides filing murder charges against them.

The CPI(M) leader also demanded that the government should get back the land given to the Sterlite unit in Thoothukudi, and also slam appropriate fine amount on the

factory for the damage it caused to the environment.

She also urged that the government ensure free and quality treatment to the victims of police attack, and also to ensure education to children of the affected, withdraw all

the cases filed against the agitators, besides enhancing compensation to kin of those who lost their lives in the firing.

Ms. Vasuki said that as per the CPI(M)'s fact finding committee's information, after the incident, the deputy tashildars were said to have ordered the firing.

But this 'documentary evidence' was created after the firing, the CPI(M) leader alleged, citing the report.

In fact, the deputy tashildars just gave a complaint to the respective police stations and had not given any order for police firing, she claimed.

Ms. Vasuki also pointed out that even now, police in Thoothukudi were picking up youths during night hours after cutting off power supply. "Such action by the police will not help bring back normalcy," she added.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Bus torching case: Injured woman dies in hospital

TNN | Jun 2, 2018, 12.20 AM IST



MADURAI: A 63-year-old woman who sustained injuries after a bus was torched by miscreants during the anti-Sterlite protest, succumbed at the Tirunelveli government hospital on Friday.

Three people Sudalaikannu, 70, from Meignanapuram, his wife Valliammal, 63, and Jabakumar, 25, from Karaikudi were injured when the TNSTC (Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation) bus in which they were travelling was set on fire at Karungulam Bridge near Srivaikuntam last Friday.

There were 49 passengers in the bus when miscreants set fire to it and escaped.

Relatives of Valliammal staged a demonstration outside the hospital demanding that her family be given a compensation of Rs 50 lakh while her husband, who was also injured, should be given Rs 5 lakh.

On Thursday, a re-postmortem was performed on seven bodies at the Tuticorin government hospital, as per an order of the Madras high court. While two bodies of Kandaiah and Kaliappan were handed over to their relatives, the families of Tamilarasan and Snowlin refused to accept the bodies and demanded that they be given the assurance that Sterlite would be prevented from operating in Tuticorin permanently.

The postmortem is yet to be conducted on six more bodies after the families of the deceased obtained a stay. Officials are continuing talks with the families and convince them to accept the bodies, sources said.

Meanwhile, the special committee with members from the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) will be visiting Tuticorin on Saturday. The team, including a senior DSP is expected to stay in Tuticorin for five days and conduct inquiries into the violence and shooting. The committee is expected to submit its reports in two weeks to the NHRC.

TAMIL NADU

SHRC team visits violence-hit areas, meets victims



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 03, 2018 00:00 IST

NHRC to begin six-day probe into violence today

A team of officials from the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) on Saturday inspected the violence-hit Collectorate premises and the nearby staff quarters of Sterlite Copper, where nearly 100 vehicles, including 26 four-wheelers, were torched when an anti-Sterlite protest turned violent on May 22.

After holding a discussion with Collector Sandeep Nanduri shortly before noon, the team, comprising Jayachandran and Chitharanjan Mohandas, visited the Collectorate's parking lot and inspected the completely charred two-wheelers that were still lying there. Later, they visited the Sterlite Copper staff quarters, housing 50 families and 100 bachelors.

“A section of the protesters who entered the staff quarters torched all the vehicles, including the four-wheelers parked on the basement. As the blaze from the burning vehicles threatened the first floor residents, the families

swiftly moved to the top floor of the three-storeyed building. Sensing danger, the police rushed to the quarters to quell the rioters and rescue the stranded families,” Joint Superintendent of Police Selvanagarathinam told the SHRC team. Following the arson, all 300 people residing at the quarters moved out.

After assessing the damage to the Collectorate premises and the Sterlite Copper staff quarters, the SHRC team met the victims of the violence, who were undergoing treatment at the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital (TMCH). The police, government officials and mediapersons were kept out.

“We told the SHRC members what we saw on that day, and about the attack that was unleashed on us,” a victim said after the team left the TMCH via the rear entrance, without addressing the mediapersons waiting at the main entrance.

The SHRC team also visited the Our Lady of Snows Church, where the anti-Sterlite protesters held a dharna for several days before the 100th-day march towards the Collectorate, and met a few affected families there.

Parallel probe

In the evening, a National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) team, comprising Bhubhul P. Prasad, Rajvir Singh, Nithin Kumar, Arun Tyagi and Lal Bahar, met the Collector. The team is expected to commence its six-day probe into the violence and the consequent police firing on Sunday, the 3rd of June.

Human rights panels begin probe into firing

SHRC team visits injured victims in hospital and houses of the deceased; discussions held with top officials in dist

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Thoothukudi

THE members of the State and National Human Rights Commissions on Saturday began their investigations into the police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters and subsequent violence.

The State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) members including retired judge Jeyachandran and bureaucrat Chitharanjan Mohandass visited the protest site at the collectorate in the presence of District Revenue Officer (DRO) Dr M Veerapan and Assistant Superintendent of Police Selvanagarathinam.

The team inspected the damages incurred on the collectorate building during the stone pelting, and the government vehicles gutted out in the violence.

The team also conducted a discussion with district collector Sandeep Nanduri, SP Murali Rambha, Tirunelveli Range DIG Kapil Kumar Saratkar on the developments, before leaving to observe the damages on the Sterlite Copper employees' residential quarters. The SHRC team visited the gunfire victims at the Thoothukudi medical college



(Left) TN State Human Rights Commission team visit Sterlite quarters Tamira 2 to record the damages; (right) officials visit the victims at GH | M BALAMURUGAN

hospital and inquired about the police firing incidents.

The SHRC members also visited the houses of Karthick, Shanmugam and Kanthia, who were killed in the police firing and condoled their deaths before

leaving for Chennai. Meanwhile, the members of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) landed in Thoothukudi for probing the police firing at the anti-Sterlite protesters here on Saturday evening. The team headed by

Pupul Dutta Prasad and members Rajvir Singh, Nitin Kumar, Arun Tyagi and Lal Bahar visited the damages incurred to the collectorate building during the stone pelting and the Sterlite employees' quarters that was set

fire by the mob after the police firing on May 22. The team held a discussion with district collector Sandeep Nanduri. The NHRC team would continue the probe till June 07, said the official sources.



SHRC begins probe into Thoothukudi police firing

M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 2:

Tamil Nadu 'State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) started enquiry on Saturday on the recent Thoothukudi violence and the police action that followed, killing 13 and injuring more than 140.

The team comprising of two members of the SHRC, D Jayachandran and Dr A Chittaranjan Mohandoss and the SP, SHRC, Ms. Sathiya Priya, arrived at Thoothukudi on Saturday morning held a brief discussion with the district collector, Sandeep Nanduri. Later the team commenced its enquiry by inspecting the damages caused by the rioters at the district collector's office premises and at the Sterlite employees' quarters.

The SHRC members too visited Thoothukudi medical college hospital and personally held enquiries with all the 56 injured people undergoing treatment there about the incident. The SHRC team, however, did not permit media persons inside the hospital, when they held the enquiry with the injured persons. The team too met the family members of the persons killed in the riot and received complaint petitions from the public and affected families.

Later, in the evening, speaking to media persons the team head, D Jayachandran said that they have collected all details and would submit their report to the chairman of the State Human Rights commission in a couple of days.

The five-member team led by senior SP and head of the investigation division, National Human Rights Commission, Pupul Dutta Prasad too arrived at Thoothukudi on the same day evening. The NHRC team however is SET to commence their enquiry on Sunday morning," said the Thoothukudi district collector, Sandeep Nanduri. An independent enquiry on the issue by Coordinating Committee for people's Inquest on Thoothukudi police firing too is to also hold its public enquiry session here on Sunday.

‘Sitting HC Judge should probe firing’

Mayiladuthurai: Prof. T. Jayaraman, state coordinator of the Anti-Methane project Federation, on Saturday called for a judicial inquiry headed by a sitting High court judge to go into the recent police firing at Thoothukudi over the Sterlite issue, which claimed 13 lives besides causing injuries to many.

In a release at Mayiladuthurai, Mr. Jayaraman also condemned the police firing and atrocities against the innocent agitators besides illegally torturing a number of youths and students. He pressed the need for a judicial inquiry headed by High Court Judge and not by a retired judge.

He also took strong exception to the detention of Tamilaga Vazhvurimai Katchi (TVK) founder Panruti T Velmurugan under the National Security Act. He urged the Tamil Nadu Government to withdraw all the cases against Velmurugan and release him immediately. Prof. Jayaraman also expressed his condolence to the family members of an activist of TVK Jagan Singh of Parangipettai, who had committed self-immolation, protesting against the arrest of Mr. Velmurugan. —DC

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Tuticorin firing: 6th victim's body handed over to family

TNN | Jun 3, 2018, 12:18 AM IST

Tuticorin: The body of Tamilarasan, who was killed in the police firing at the district collectorate during the anti-Sterlite protest on May 22 and 23 was handed over to his family on Saturday. Of the 13 people who were killed in the violence, the second post-mortem was performed on seven bodies.

So far, six bodies including that of Tamilarasan have been handed over to their families. It may be recalled that the bodies of Selvasekar, 42, Shanmugam, 38, and Karthik, 20, were handed over to their families after the second post-mortem on Thursday, while the bodies of Kaliappan, 22, and Kandhaiah, 58, were handed over on Friday.

Sources said that the family members of J Snowlin is likely to receive the body on Sunday, as they have planned to organise a special mass on that day.

Meanwhile, minister for information and publicity Kadambur C Raju handed over a cheque for Rs 20 lakh from the chief minister's general relief fund to Tamilarasan's mother Ramalakshmi. He also handed over the cheque to Maheswari, mother of Kaliappan and also visited those injured in the riots getting treated at the Thoothukudi Medical College and Hospital.

The minister told reporters that the deceased and the injured have thanked the state for issuing the government order to close Sterlite and expressed satisfaction over the quality of treatment provided to the injured. He also said that some of them have made appealed to the government seeking fulfilment of their demands.

"Princeton, who lost his right leg in the violence (due to amputation after suffering a bullet injury) has requested a government job. The genuine request will be taken to the notice of the chief minister and will be fulfilled. He will be shifted to Chennai for fitting an artificial limb," the minister added.

District collector Sandeep Nanduri and superintendent of police (SP) Murali Rambha, hospital authorities were present with the minister during the events. The SP said that the bus burning case by rioters at Karungulam eight days ago that claimed the life of a passenger Valliammal, 63, in the hospital on Friday has been altered to murder. "All the three accused in the case have been arrested," the SP said.

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Firing victims stable and out of danger

TNN | Jun 3, 2018, 12:18 AM IST



TUTICORIN: All the patients including those who suffered critical injuries during the violence and police firing on May 22 and 23 are stated to be out of danger, sources in the Thoothukudi Medical College and Hospital said. They also ruled out the possibility of the death toll going up. “So far, four people who were critically injured were shifted to speciality care hospitals in Madurai. Two of them were shifted to the Government Rajaji Hospital, in Madurai and one each to two private hospitals in Madurai. The rest are undergoing treatment here. Everyone is out of danger,” director of medical education (DME) A Edwin Joe said.

The DME told TOI that one of the injured has recovered from the injuries he suffered in the incident but is suffering from renal failure. “Justin, 29, suffered a blood clot in the head during the riots, which was surgically removed. As he is suffering from renal failure, the surgery could not be performed with general anaesthesia,” he said.

Joe said that the surgery to remove the clot was performed with local anaesthesia. “He has recovered from the injury. But he has to undergo renal transplant as he has been suffering from renal failure for four years. He was undergoing native medication for four years, but in vain,” he added.

Counselling is being given to the youth to get shifted to the Government Rajaji Hospital, Madurai, for renal transplant. The bodies of the six people for whom postmortem has not been performed, due to the legal proceedings underway before the Madras high court, are well preserved, the DME said.

TAMIL NADU

'District officials, police responsible for deaths'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, JUNE 04, 2018 00:00 IST

Children ruthlessly attacked: People's Inquest

A People's Inquest (PI) team that completed a two-day inquest into the police firing against protesters opposing the Sterlite plant has held the district administration and the police responsible for the death of 13 persons.

The PI team comprised two retired judges of two High Courts, two retired IAS officers and three retired IPS officers in addition to senior advocates, journalists and social workers.

The team recommended a ban on Sterlite with immediate effect, dismantling of the plant at Thoothukudi, clearing of the plant area and creating a memorial in honour of those who were "killed" by the police, according to a release.

The team also wanted the government to establish who ordered the shooting and make them accountable as per law. It also wanted action taken against those who were carrying out unlawful searches and assaulting and harassing the public.

During the inquest, the PI team found several gaps in the implementation of the prohibitory orders.

"Testimonies were also received which revealed that children who were part of the rally were ruthlessly attacked by the police and several children were illegally detained. Further, these brutalities towards children continued in the aftermath of the firing and during the searches conducted by the police. The PI team noted that in spite of such serious reported crimes and atrocities against children, the State Commission for Children did not take any immediate action," the release said.

Brutalities towards children continued in the aftermath of the firing and during the searches conducted by the police

TAMIL NADU

'Withdraw cases against residents'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

CHENNAI, JUNE 04, 2018 00:00 IST

All India Samathuva Makkal Katchi president R. Sarathkumar met Chief

Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Sunday and sought the withdrawal of cases filed against the residents of Thoothukudi in relation to the violence during an anti-Sterlite protest on May 22.

“The government should also take steps to ensure that normalcy returns to the district, and the people, who are living in fear of a reprisal by the police, should be able to return to their normal lives,” Mr. Sarathkumar told the Chief Minister, according to a statement issued by him.

‘Arrests continuing’

He said the residents told him that the police were still arresting people from their homes in the middle of the night.

“Students, traders and office-goers are living in unnecessary and perennial fear and are having doubts about their future,” Mr. Sarathkumar said.

Police firing premeditated: Yechury



STAFF REPORTER

JUNE 04, 2018 00:00 IST

‘Inhumane barbarity was unleashed on innocent people’

Communist Party of India (Marxist) general secretary Sitaram Yechury on Sunday said the police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi on May 22, which claimed 13 lives, was pre-meditated, and was not a response to provocation, as claimed by the State government.

After meeting the families of the deceased and also the injured at the Thoothukudi Government Medical College Hospital, he said, “It was a brutal police firing. The inhumane barbarity was unleashed on very innocent and peaceful demonstrators.”

Noting that gunfire should be a last resort to quell a riot, and should be used only after exhausting all other options like lathi charge, tear gas and water cannons, he said, “But this was not the case in Thoothukudi, where the police opened fire after a lathi charge. Most of the gunshots hit above the waist, targeting the chest. It was certainly not a move aimed at managing the crowd.”

On May 22 — the 100th day of the agitation — the protesters wanted to approach the Collectorate, demanding the closure of Sterlite Copper. But it was strange that the Collector and the Superintendent of Police were away at that time, Mr. Yechury said.

“Who gave the order to open fire, and to whom was the authority delegated by the Collector? Did somebody assume the authority on their own?” Mr. Yechury asked. He sought a judicial probe, by a sitting judge, into the circumstances surrounding the incident. He appealed to the government to withdraw the police personnel deployed in Thoothukudi and also the “false cases” filed against protesters.

Based on the findings of the inquiry, the Vedanta group should be directed to pay compensation for the damage caused to agriculture due to the depletion of groundwater and to people's health due to the contamination of drinking water, he said.

TAMIL NADU

Thoothukudi bids tearful adieu to youngest gunfire victim



STAFF REPORTER

JUNE 04, 2018 00:00 IST

Hundreds of mourners on Sunday bade a tearful adieu to J. Snowlin, an 18-year-old girl who fell to a bullet during an anti-Sterlite agitation in Thoothukudi on May 22. She was the youngest victim of the police firing.

Residents gathered in large numbers outside her house at Mini Sahayapuram in Lions Town, where her mortal remains were kept.

After a re-postmortem, Snowlin's body was handed over to her family on Sunday morning. Clergies were among the mourners who prayed for the

departed soul to rest in peace.

Parishioners of the Sahaya Matha Church in Lions Town offered prayers, which began at 11 a.m., sources said. Subsequently, the body was taken in procession along George Road.

People of all faiths lined up on George Road and offered floral tributes. Pots of water were kept alongside the road to quench the thirst of mourners. Wall posters mourning Snowlin's death were seen at several locations in the town.

Her mortal remains were buried in a graveyard on George Road, sources said.

People of all faiths lined up on George Road and offered floral tributes

TAMIL NADU

NHRC launches probe

STAFF REPORTER

JUNE 04, 2018 00:00 IST

A five-member team from the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Sunday launched a preliminary investigation into the violence that marred the anti-Sterlite agitation on May 22.

The team, comprising Vipul Pritto Prasad, Rajvir Singh, Nithin Kumar, Arun Thiyaki and Lal Bahar, held inquiries with the kin of the victims.

As part of the investigation, the team inquired about the cause of the deaths and whether compensation had been provided to the affected families. Of those who were summoned for the probe, 13 members of the victims' families extended their cooperation, sources said.

Thousands attend funeral procession as Snowlin laid to rest

Lionstown wore a gloomy look as over 5000 people from places including Manapad, Amalie Nagar, and Tiruchendur joined the procession holding black flags

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Thoothukudi

THE funeral of J Snowlin (17) who was killed in the Thoothukudi police firing was held at the cemetery of Sahaya Annai church in Lionstown, in the presence of thousands of people who came from across the district to pay their last respects to the teenager here on Sunday.

After a re-postmortem conducted at the Thoothukudi medical college hospital, Snowlin's body was taken to her residence at Minisahayapuram in Lionstown. The police bundobust was withdrawn following a request from the victim's family. People flew black

flags during the funeral procession to the Sahaya Annai church, the parish she belonged to. After the final prayers, the body was carried to the cemetery on George road amid wails and mourning of her relatives, acquaintances, friends and the general public who came from places like Manapad, Amalie Nagar, and Tiruchendur to pay homage to the girl. After the last rites, the body was laid to rest at the cemetery. The coastal areas wore a gloomy look while posters condoling the death appeared across Thoothukudi. At least, 5000 people participated in the funeral procession, said an official. Snowlin was fronting the anti-



J Snowlin

Sterlite rally taken out from Mathakovil on May 22, marking the 100th Day of the agitation demanding permanent closure of the copper smelter functioning in SIPCOT complex. While she was gunned down by the police, her friend Infanta had a narrow es-

cape. She fell on the ground sustaining bullet injuries on the face at the Collectorate premises. An autopsy was performed by the doctors at Thoothukudi medical college hospital and re-postmortem was conducted on her body following a court order. Despite talks by the revenue officials, the parents and relatives of the minor girl had earlier refused to receive the body saying that the demands of the protesters should be met first.

"There was no special negotiations with the bereaved family, but the state government's immediate action on the permanent closure of Sterlite Copper, and the order issued in the favour of

the public were emphasised," said tasildar Nallasivvan who got a break through in pacifying the relatives of the victims killed in the gunfire. It was a daunting task to convince the relatives as everyone is aware of the situation, he added.

The body was handed over at 10 am and collector Sandeep Nanduri granted a solatium of ₹20 lakh to her father Johnson at Thoothukudi medical college hospital.

The district administration has handed over seven bodies that underwent a second autopsy on a high court order. Six bodies of the gunfire victims have been preserved in cold storage.



Mortal remains of anti-Sterlite gunfire victim J Snowlin being taken to her home in an ambulance from Thoothukudi medical college hospital on Sunday | EXPRESS



Yechury alleges Vedanta nexus with BJP, Cong governments

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Thoothukudi

STATING that Vedanta Resources, the parent company of Sterlite Industries, is one of the leading donors to both BJP and Congress governments, CPI(M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury alleged that the nexus between the metal and mining conglomerate and Union governments had resulted in environmental violations.

Yechury was here in the district to meet the victims of Thoothukudi police firing. He met the family members of four persons, who were shot dead in police firing and expressed his condolences. Accompanied by CPI(M) State secretary K Balakrishnan and district secretary K S Arujunan and party cadre, he also met the injured persons who are recovering at Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital (ThMCH).

Addressing media persons later, Yechury blamed the State police department for flouting the riot control guidelines. He termed the firing as a pre-planned attack. "Firing should have been the last option when measures such as tear gas shelling, baton-charge and usage of water cannons fail to yield result. However, the firing took place in the initial stage itself. Many were shot on their upper part of the body. This is certainly not the way to control the riot. The firing is unacceptable and undemocratic," Yechury pointed out.

Levelling a series of allegations against Sterlite, the CPM general secretary said that the plant had been regularly flouting rules despite the Supreme Court imposing a fine of ₹100 crore on it. "Right from leakage of poisonous



CPI(M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury visiting the victims of Thoothukudi police firing at the medical college hospital in the city on Sunday | EXPRESS

Demand for CBI investigation

CPM leader Sitaram Yechury opposed the ongoing probe and pressed for a Central Bureau of Investigation inquiry under the direct monitoring of High Court or a probe by a sitting High Court judge, into the firing

gas, water contamination, looting of groundwater, the plant has been polluting the environment since 1990. For all these years, the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) failed to take any action against Sterlite," he added.

Expressing his opposition over the appointment of a one-member commission to investigate

the May 22 Thoothukudi riots and police firing, Yechury pressed for a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) inquiry under the direct monitoring of High Court or an investigation by a sitting High Court judge. He also sought the suspension of former Thoothukudi collector and superintendent of police until the completion of investigation and filing of criminal cases against them.

He also demanded an inquiry into Vedanta's donations to Congress and BJP governments. "We suspect that Sterlite has violated norms because of its connection with the Union governments. The Modi government gave approval for the expansion of Sterlite in 2017. As Vedanta is a leading donor to BJP and Congress, an inquiry is necessary," Yechury demanded.



THOOTHUKUDI VIOLENCE

Probe will bring out the facts: Swamy

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 3

BJP MP Subramanian Swamy has claimed that the one-person enquiry commission instituted by the State government will throw light on the background of the 13 persons killed in police firing and the violence on May 22 in Thoothukudi.

"I can express condolences only after knowing the full details about their background. We will know about them after the enquiry is over. We will come to know if the 13 persons killed in police firing are general public, LTTE or Naxalite," he told reporters on Sunday.

Without going into

details, Subramanian Swamy? later tweeted in his official account @Swamy39 "what is happening in Kashmir 100 times more than what happened in Thuthukudi (Tuticorin). Yet TN Police shot dead 13 persons to restore law and order. But in Kashmir case registered against innocent CRPF!! Not acceptable."

Replying to a query on Sterlite-related developments, Swamy claimed that for some time, Naxalites, LTTE, terrorists and some NGOs had been trying to cause violence hiding behind the people's issue. "This had happened in Kudankulam protests and in jallikattu agitation too. But what hap-

pened in Thoothukudi would come out only in the inquiry commission's report," he insisted.

The senior BJP leader declined to react to the Tamil film 'superstar' Rajinikanth's "graveyard" comment saying, "you see, Rajini is an actor. I can't believe actors. I am a politician. I can't react to it."

After visiting the strife-torn coastal town, the actor had said remarked, "don't forget that it was the infiltration of anti-social elements and their violent conduct that provoked the police firing. It is not proper to protest for anything and everything, as otherwise Tamil Nadu will become a graveyard."

PEOPLE WILL NOT STOP PROTESTS, SAYS KAMAL

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 3

Taking a different stand from actor Rajinikanth on Thoothukudi Sterlite issue, Makkal Needhi Maiam leader and actor Kamal Haasan said the people will not stop protests and they should not stop it.

"I saw the protest of Thoothukudi people was on the right course. People will not stop the protests and they should not stop it. I am not going to Bengaluru to discuss the issues of the cinema industry. I will discuss Cauvery issue," he told reporters at Chennai airport on Sunday.

He further said the views expressed by Rajinikanth on Sterlite protests were his personal views. After visiting the people injured in the police firing at Thoothukudi, Rajinikanth had stated that it was not proper to protest for anything and everything, as otherwise, Tamil Nadu will become a graveyard.

"I welcome the decision of DMK party to attend the assembly," he said while answering a question. He left for Bengaluru on Sunday night to meet Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy on Monday.



NHRC begins probe on Sterlite violence

DC CORRESPONDENT
THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 3

A five-member team of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) commenced its enquiry in Thoothukudi on Sunday into the recent incidents of violence and police firing against anti-Sterlite protesters.

Led by Phupal Dutta Prasad, senior SP, investigation division of NHRC, the team has a DSP, Rajbir Singh and three inspectors, Lal Bahar, Nitin Kumar and Arun Tyagi.

They divided into two groups and started their enquiry.

The first team of two members—Phupal Dutta Prasad and Rajbir Singh summoned family members of the persons killed in police action and enquired with them.

The other team of three inspectors visited all 56 injured persons undergoing treatment at the government medical college hospital and held the enquiry on the first day.

The NHRC members will continue their extensive enquiry in Thoothukudi for five days till June 7, according to sources.

● **Led by Phupal Dutta Prasad, senior SP, investigation division of NHRC, the team has a DSP, Rajbir Singh and three inspectors**

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

People's inquest sees more flaws

TNN | Jun 4, 2018, 12.24 PM IST

TUTICORIN: Besides the manner in which the police fired at the anti-Sterlite protesters in Tuticorin on May 22 and 23, the Coordinating Committee for People's Inquest has found fault with the entire issue from the clamping of the prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPC in select areas in the city on May 21.

Former judges and senior bureaucrats under the Coordinating Committee for People's Inquest have conducted a fact finding study into police firing. Former chief secretary of Haryana M G Devasahayam, who is one of the members of the team, said that he is yet to get a copy of the 144 order. "I suspect the entire incident involve a massive conspiracy. A 144 order should be properly communicated to the people and people should not have been allowed to gather. It has been conspired step by step till it ended with the brutal killings," he said when the team presented its initial findings here on Sunday.

Pointing at various flaws, former additional chief secretary Christudoss Gandhi alleged that weapons such as semi-automatic rifles that are not usually used to control the mob was purposely used in Tuticorin. "They have not been used anywhere in Tamil Nadu so far," he said.

Former Madras high court judge Hariparanthaman said that there were four spells of police firing and that they were unnecessary. "Firing took place at the collectorate, outside the collectorate, at Therespuram that is 13km away and at Anna Nagar the following day (May 23) when the public was unarmed," he said. Stating that the police are the accused in the case he strongly felt that the probe should be monitored by the high court.

"We cannot rule out infiltration by anti-social elements into the protest," said former director of the national police academy, Hyderabad, Kamal Kumar while many members of the 23 person committee refused to accept it.

Henri Tiphagne of People's Watch, Madurai, said that a detailed report on the inquest will be published in three weeks and the recommendations will be forwarded to the government.

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

NHRC begins inquiry, meets victims, kin

TNN | Jun 4, 2018, 12.33 PM IST



TUTICORIN: Hundreds of people thronged Sahaya Matha Church at Lions Town in the city on Sunday morning to attend the funeral of J Snowlin, 17, who was killed in the police firing during the anti-Sterlite protest in Tuticorin on May 22. Hers was the 7th body to be handed over to the family after performing re-postmortem as directed by the Madras high court. The ardent protester suffered a bullet injury in her mouth. The body was handed over to her family at the Thoothukudi Medical College and Hospital amidst tight police security, as there have been allegations that the girl was targeted as she was leading the protest and raising her voice against the copper plant. The district administration and the police officials said that they are waiting for the court's direction (on June 6) to conduct postmortem on the remaining six bodies.

Meanwhile, the five-member National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) started its formal inquiry by meeting people who were directly affected by the police firing. Initially the team planned to visit the families of the deceased at their house, but later the venue was shifted to the Tuticorin Corporation's north zone office, where the relatives were asked to appear for the inquiry.

Summonses were sent to the concerned persons through revenue officials from Saturday night. Two of the members, Bhubhul P Prasad and Rajvir Singh, met people at the zonal office, beginning with Supreme Court lawyer A Rajarajan on whose case before the Delhi High Court the NHRC team has come to Tuticorin. He gave his statement in writing before putting forward three requests to them.

Members of the team then met families of eight of the victims who were killed in the firing. Members of five other families – Maniraj, Antony Selvaraj, Jayaraman, Gladston and Snowlin – did not turn up for the inquiry till Sunday evening. Meanwhile, three other members, Nithin Kumar, Arun Tyagi and Lal Bahar, visited the injured at the Thoothukudi Medical College and Hospital.

TAMIL NADU

'How can court prevent handover of bodies?'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, JUNE 05, 2018 00:00 IST

The first Division Bench of Chief Justice Indira Banerjee and Justice P.T. Asha on Monday wondered how the court could prevent the State government from handing over the bodies of those who died in the Thoothukudi police firing to their family members, on the basis of interim orders passed on a public interest litigation (PIL) petition filed by a group of three lawyers who were in no way related to the dead.

When the petitioner's counsel, R. Sankarasubbu, requested the court for early hearing of the PIL, which was filed during the summer vacation sitting, when the interim orders were passed by another Division Bench, the Chief Justice said the police firing was a very tragic incident. However, she wondered how the court could interfere with the process of handing over the bodies to victims' families.

"Those who have lost their relatives would now want to perform the final rites. Even the poorest of the poor have emotional bonding with their relatives. The greatest loss is suffered by them. They should come to the court and say what they want. For you, it is public interest, but for someone who has lost their near and dear ones, it is an emotional issue. Let the blood relations come to the court and say whether they want re-postmortem or not," the Bench said.

"If the families say [yes], we can order conduct of re-postmortem any number of times," the Chief Justice said. Referring to news reports of a person having approached the court with a plea to hand over the body of his son to him, she said a court of law could not decline such a request.

Earlier, Government Pleader T.N. Rajagopalan brought to the notice of the court that initially, a Division Bench had ordered preservation of all 13 bodies until further orders. Subsequently, another Division Bench, during the vacation sitting, ordered the handover of seven of the 13 bodies after conducting re-postmortem.

CM blames miscreants for violence during Sterlite stir



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, JUNE 05, 2018 00:00 IST

Will the govt. act against 'snipers', asks Stalin

Replying to DMK working president and Leader of the Opposition M.K. Stalin

and Congress Legislative Party Leader K.R. Ramasamy in the Assembly, who during the Zero Hour urged the government to withdraw cases registered against Sterlite protesters, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami maintained on Monday that the State government had only arrested those who indulged in violence and not the general public.

He also indicated that his government would act tough on “miscreants and anti-social elements” who attacked (the police and damaged public property) with petrol bombs and wooden logs.

“They were attacking cars with petrol bombs. They were attacking with wooden logs. They were destroying public property. Are they the general public who took part in protests? There were miscreants and anti-social elements,” Mr. Palaniswami argued.

“Those indulging in violence, anti-social elements and miscreants should not be encouraged by any government,” the Chief Minister said and contended that they would become a major threat in the future. There was photographic evidence to prove that these people had indulged in violence, the Chief Minister said.

Those with knowledge about the protests in Thoothukudi on May 22 were welcome to submit their inputs to the Justice Aruna Jagadeesan Commission of Inquiry, he said and added that the government would take action based on the findings of the panel.

However, Mr. Stalin sought to know whether the State government would take action against police personnel in plainclothes, who were seen in photographs aiming at protesters and shooting at them.

Solatium announced

Meanwhile, in an official release, the Chief Minister announced a solatium of Rs. 10 lakh to the family of a woman who died of burn injuries after a State-run bus was torched by anti-social elements in Thoothukudi district in connection with the anti-Sterlite protests.

Valliammal suffered burn injuries when miscreants torched a Tirunelveli-bound bus at Karungulam near Srivaikundam on May 25. She eventually died on May 31.

TAMIL NADU

NHRC probe continues



STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 05, 2018 00:00 IST

The team meets the families of Antony Selvaraj, Gladson and Snowlin

A five-member team of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) here on Monday continued to probe into the firing incident in Thoothukudi.

The investigations into the riot, which occurred during the anti-Sterlite agitation in Thoothukudi on May 22, reached its second day. The riot left 13 dead and several others who took part in the agitation were injured. The violence that ravaged Thoothukudi caused damage to over 60 vehicles, mostly on the premises of Collectorate.

The team comprising Vipul Pritto Prasad, Rajvir Singh, Nithin Kumar, Arun Thiyaki and Lal Bahar conducted the inquiry with relatives of families of victims in the riot, sources said.

After conducting preliminary inquiries, the team met the bereaved families of Antony Selvaraj, Gladson and Snowlin, who were killed in the riot, as part of the investigation. Besides, the team held inquiries with police and revenue officials.

Rajini echoed Sterlite's voice, says Nallakannu



STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, JUNE 05, 2018 00:00 IST

Blames police for the violence in Kachanatham

Veteran Communist Party of India leader R. Nallakannu on Monday charged that Rajini Makkal Mandram founder Rajinikanth spoke as Sterlite Copper's voice in his recent interview to media after meeting those injured in the anti-Sterlite protests in Thoothukudi.

Interacting with journalists after visiting Kachanatham village in Sivaganga district, which witnessed brutal attack on Dalits by a group of caste Hindus leading to the death of three persons, Mr. Nallakannu said Mr. Rajinikanth had initially condemned the killing of people in police firing during the protest on May 22. "However, within a week, his stance changed. When he visited Thoothukudi, his voice sounded like the voice of Sterlite," he charged.

Terming the killing of protesters in Thoothukudi the worst atrocity that Tamil

Nadu had ever seen, he blamed the government and the police, in particular, for intentionally “murdering” the protesters.

Stating that the administration’s claim that officials in the rank of Deputy Tahsildars issued the shooting orders was unacceptable, he alleged that the police were still harassing the protesters by foisting cases and arresting them.

On the attack on Dalits in Kachanatham, he said the police failed to protect the families despite complaints against a section of caste Hindus. “The men and women from the oppressed community in the village were doing better educationally and economically. It appears that a few caste Hindu families could not tolerate this,” he said. Urging the police and the district administration to arrest all the accused in the case and ensure punishment for them in the court swiftly, he said the protection of the oppressed community in the village must be ensured. “The government must also arrange for all basic amenities in the village,” he said.

TAMIL NADU

'Arrest anti-Sterlite protesters who set bus on fire on May 25'



STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 05, 2018 00:00 IST

Kin of woman killed in the incident seek adequate compensation, govt. job

The family members of Valliammal (68), who succumbed to burn injuries she sustained when a bus was set on fire allegedly by anti-Sterlite protesters on May 25, came to the Collectorate here on Monday, demanding stringent punishment to those who perpetrated the crime.

The family members, including S. Arumugam, the son of the deceased, said anti-Sterlite protesters intercepted the bus in which Valliammal was travelling along with her husband P. Sudalai (78) near Karungulam and hurled a petrol bomb on it.

Mr. Arumugam, a resident of Navaladi Vilai near Meignanapuram, said both his parents sustained burn injuries in the attack and were admitted to Tirunelveli Government Medical College Hospital, where Valliammal succumbed to the burns on May 31.

Apart from arresting the accused, the State government should give them adequate compensation and a government job to one member of the family, he said. A petition to this effect had been submitted to Collector Sandeep Nanduri, he added.

‘Dismantle Sterlite unit’

Meanwhile, some members of Anti-Sterlite Movement submitted a petition at the Collectorate demanding dismantling of Sterlite Copper unit and cleaning of effluents discharged by it. They also said the State government should adopt a resolution for the permanent closure of the unit in the ongoing Assembly session.

They further said the government should register a case under Section 302 (murder) of the IPC against those responsible for the killing of 13 protesters in police firing. Their others demands included construction of a memorial for the 13 victims, a compensation of Rs. 1 crore and a government job each to their families, and a compensation of Rs. 20 lakh each to those who were injured.

Princeton (22) of Thoothukudi and Vijayakumar (22) of Sathyanagar, who had their legs amputated due to serious injuries sustained in the police action, should also be given government jobs, they said, adding the police should stop conducting searches in houses at some localities, including Threspuram, and withdraw cases registered against the protesters.

TAMIL NADU

Head of inquiry panel promises thorough probe



STAFF REPORTER

JUNE 05, 2018 00:00 IST

Commission to receive affidavits from witnesses till June 30

Justice Aruna Jagadeesan, a retired judge of the Madras High Court, who is heading the inquiry commission appointed by the State government to probe the deadly violence that broke out during an anti-Sterlite agitation in Thoothukudi on May 22, has assured that a fair and thorough probe would be conducted.

Addressing a press conference at the Collectorate here on Monday, she said the government had issued the notification for the inquiry commission. Affidavits from witnesses directly or indirectly connected with the incidents of violence or irregularities could either be submitted before the inquiry commission at its camp office at the Old Circuit House in Thoothukudi or at the main office at NCB-28, Kumarasamy Raja Salai (Greenways Road) in Chennai.

As per the notification, the last date for submission of affidavits, which should include necessary details concerning the riot, was June 22. But it has since been extended till June 30.

Those who submit affidavits have the liberty to decide and inform the commission whether they wish to be questioned at the camp office in Thoothukudi or in Chennai. It was important to maintain secrecy to protect information and safeguard witnesses, Ms. Justice Jagadeesan said.

Further, she said necessary arrangements had been made, and that the public and the victims of the violence need not hesitate or fear to furnish information relating to incidents of violence before the commission.

A retired district court judge, a retired senior court official and two officials of the District Administration have been deputed at the Thoothukudi camp office to receive affidavits from 10.30 a.m. to 6 p.m., and similar arrangements have been made at the main office in Chennai. If necessary, notices or summons would be issued to those who file affidavits before the Commission.

Ms. Justice Jagadeesan said “unedited” video clips recorded by mediapersons during the riot need to be brought to the attention of the inquiry commission, either in Thoothukudi or in Chennai, within a week.

Three phases

The inquiry would be carried out in three phases, initially involving people

affected by the riot, the injured victims in hospital and the relatives of victims who died of gunshot wounds. Subsequently, inquiries would be held with eyewitnesses, social activists, those who knew about the incidents indirectly, mediapersons and the like.

The final phase would involve inquiries with policemen, revenue officials, doctors who were involved in providing treatment to the victims and carrying out postmortem examinations, high-ranking police officials, the former Collector and the former Superintendent of Police.

One-man commission begins probe into police firing

Retired High Court judge Aruna Jegadeesan assures impartial probe; to meet the victims of firing, eye-witnesses, and the police officials

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Thoothukudi

THE one-man inquiry commission of retired High Court judge Aruna Jegadeesan has started the investigation into the May 22 police firing that claimed the lives of 13 anti-Sterlite protestors.

Talking to media at the collectorate here on Monday, the former High Court judge assured an impartial probe and said that she would inquire into the incident

in three phases.

"The public can submit the evidences and facts related to the police firing in the form of affidavits either at the head office on Greenways Road in Chennai or at the camp office set up at the circuit house on or before June 22," she said.

The commission also urged the press persons to submit the unedited video footages that are in their possession to find out the fact behind the police firing. "Those who submit the affidavit

Probe in three phases

The one-man commission will be inquiring the incident in three phases. The public can submit the evidences and facts related to the police firing in the form of affidavits. He has urged the press persons to submit the unedited video footages that are in their possession to find out the fact behind the police firing

will be summoned, if necessary, for investigation," she said.

A district judge and a senior officer has been deployed at the camp office here to receive the af-

fidavits. The summary of the investigation will be submitted to the State government on June 30.

Jegadeesan said that she would meet the injured persons

who are undergoing treatment at Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital.

On Tuesday, sources said that she would assess the damages of the collectorate building, government vehicles and staff quarters of Sterlite Copper employees. She would also visit the VVD signal where the protesters clashed with the police on May 22.

Divulging her investigation plans, she said that she was planning to carry out the probe in three phases. "At first, state-

ments will be taken from the people injured in the gunfire and lathicharge and the relatives of the dead, secondly those persons who witnessed the police shootout and riot will be questioned. In the third phase, police personnel involved in the firing, revenue officials, doctors who performed postmortem, former Thoothukudi Collector and Superintendent of Police will be questioned," added the commission.



No one can reopen Sterlite plant in Thoothukudi: CM

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 4

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Monday reiterated that the GO on permanently shutting Vedanta group's Sterlite plant in Thoothukudi is valid and strong enough and that no one can reopen the unit as all vital approvals (to the plant) have been cancelled.

Responding to DMK working president M. K. Stalin's plea for an Assembly resolution, Mr Palaniswami told the Assembly on Monday that the plant was shut permanently and no one could reopen it. Justifying the GO passed by his government, he said the government order was legally valid. "The plant cannot be opened. It is permanently closed and sealed. All permissions like boiler license and power connection were cancelled," he said.

The CM also justified the police action on those who unleashed violence during the anti-Sterlite protest on May 22 and emphasised that "no government should encourage anti-social elements." Recalling the violent incidents during the protest rally in Thoothukudi, especially hurling petrol bombs and beating up people with



The CM also justified the police action on those who unleashed violence during the anti-Sterlite protest on May 22 and emphasised that "no government should encourage anti-social elements."

wooden logs and damaging public property, Mr. Palaniswami asked "are they general public? They are miscreants and anti-socials."

Raising the issue after Question Hour, Mr Stalin who demanded a resolution in the Assembly on permanent closure of the plant and hiking solatium to police firing victims during anti-Sterlite protests to Rs 1 crore, sought the dropping of cases registered on people during the violence. M. Stalin claimed that the protesters were "not anti-socials, poisonous elements or terrorists." Congress Legislature Party leader K. R. Ramasamy too echoed DMK's stand and demanded the withdrawal of cases.

The Chief Minister further said action would be taken based on the report submitted by the one-per-

son Commission of Inquiry led by retired judge Aruna Jagadeesan.

Joining the CM, law minister C. Ve. Shanmugam, citing the case on the earlier Assembly resolution in 2011 recommending commutation of death sentence for Rajiv Gandhi assassins, said the issue went to court. "There is no point in merely passing resolution in the House. Even Tamil Nadu's 69 per cent reservation under the 9th Schedule of the Constitution which bars judicial review, went to court. Matters like legislation or resolution could be taken up by courts for review," he added.

Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam said if Sterlite issue went to court, then it would be legally demonstrated that the closure was in tune with the state's powers.

Anti-Sterlite activist who challenged Rajini cools off

M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 4:

Twenty-three-year old anti-Sterlite activist K Santhosh Raj, who shot to fame for questioning Rajinikanth when the latter visited the injured people at the hospital here, blamed the media for misinterpreting him as he is an ardent fan of Rajini.

Santhosh, a former SFI member and presently coordinator of the All College Students Union, is now quiet and responding with only a smile to those who visit him at the hospital. He told the DC that he had not asked Rajinikanth with the malicious intention of insulting him.

“I asked him because I felt that if he had intervened in the issue earlier, things would not have gone so wrong,” said the young activist, who believes that the television media and



social media grossly misinterpreted his statement without understanding the sentiment behind it, just to boost their TRP ratings.

“I am an ardent fan of Rajini and watched ‘Kabali’ movie, the first day in Thoothukudi,” said Santhosh. He added that a youth named Dhileeban visited him, took a selfie with him and posted it on social media to portray him as anti-national. Dhileeban was the one who burnt the national flag. “I had no idea who he was. Only after seeing the comments posted in response to the photo that

he (Dhileeban) posted on social media did I come to know of his identity,” said poor Santhosh Raj. He said that he had posted a video on social media, clarifying that he had no intention to insult Rajinikanth.

“He may speak calmly now so as to neutralize any negative effect, but he is the one who posed similar tough questions to state minister for information and publicity, Kadambur Raju and Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam when they visited the injured here,” said another injured person undergoing treatment at the same ward.

“It is true that some men came and threatened him for insulting Rajinikanth the same night,” added this man. Santhosh also received the relief amount of ₹10,000 given by Rajinikanth to each of the injured persons.

Withdraw excess police forces from Thoothukudi: CPM

Thanjavur: The Tamil Nadu government should withdraw the additional police forces posted at the recently riot-hit Thoothukudi to facilitate return of normalcy in the pearl city said Mr. G. Ramakrishnan, CPI(M) polit-bureau member at Kumbakonam near here on Monday. He told presspersons that government is claiming that normalcy has returned to Thoothukudi. Unless the police force is withdrawn people will not feel the normalcy, Ramakrishnan said.

Probe into T'kudi violence begins

M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 4

The Tamil Nadu government appointed single judge commission to probe the May 22/23 violence in Thoothukudi commenced its enquiry on Monday.

Declaring the commencement of the probe, commission head and retired High Court judge Aruna Jagadeesan told media persons at the Thoothukudi district collector's office that a retired district judge and retired staff of the judiciary along with two personnel from the Thoothukudi district administration, have



Aruna Jagadeesan

also been appointed to receive petitions and affidavits from the affected persons, public, media, people who witnessed the incident directly and those who have information about the violence.

Stating that the last date of the submission of affi-

davits has been extended to June 30, she said that those who are willing to submit their petitions could do so either at the camp office of the Commission at the old circuit house on South beach road in Thoothukudi or at the headquarters office on Greenways road in Chennai. "People having video footage of the incidents can submit unedited version of their videos," said the retired judge who added that edited videos would not be accepted as evidence by the Commission.

On receiving the affidavits, the Commission

will examine these and summon people for enquiry, said Justice Aruna Jagadeesan who also said that the witness summoned for enquiry could give his/her statement either at the Thoothukudi camp office or at the Chennai office.

Later, Justice Aruna Jagadeesan inspected the damage caused at the district collector's office and at the Sterlite employees quarters and went to the government medical college hospital to hold an enquiry with the injured persons there. She also visited some of the families of the persons killed

in the police action.

Meanwhile, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) held an enquiry with Sterlite employees, and the family members of five killed in police action at their camp office at the West Zone office of the Thoothukudi corporation on the second day on Monday. The Thoothukudi sub-collector, along with the two deputy tahsildars and the zonal tahsildar who ordered the police firing and the policemen who carried out the firing order also appeared before the NHRC team for enquiry on Monday.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Tuticorin MLA blames chief minister for police firing

tnn | Jun 5, 2018, 12.43 AM IST



TUTICORIN: DMK's Tuticorin MLA P Geetha Jeevan has said that Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswami is blaming DMK to escape from the responsibility of the police firing that claimed the lives of 13 innocent people during the anti-Sterlite protest in Tuticorin on May 22 and 23. She strongly criticised the chief minister for stating that he had come to know about the police firing only after watching television channels. She attributed poor governance and inability of the administration as reasons for the anti-Sterlite protest ending up in police firing. It is to cover such issues the Chief Minister is blaming the DMK, she said. The MLA was talking to reporters on Monday after distributing gold rings to 10 children born in the government hospital in Kovilpatti on Sunday, the birthday of DMK president M Karunanidhi.

Meanwhile, CB-CID personnel have started formal inquiries into the cases pertaining to the riots and police firing. Headed by CB-CID SP Praveen Kumar Abinav and ADSP Marirajan, five DSPs started probing one case each. DSP Anil Kumar will probe the SIPCOT police station case. DSPs Kabimullah, Ramesh Babu and Vijayaraghavan will probe the three cases in the South police station. DSP Saravanan will probe the case registered in the North station.

Members of the National Human Rights Commission continued their probe into the violence for the second day on Monday. The families of Snowlin, Maniraj, Gladston, Shanmugam and Jayaraman, who were killed in the police firing, were summoned for inquiry. One of the teams also visited their houses and conducted inquiries. Nine revenue officials, including deputy Tahsildars who are said to have given the firing order, were also summoned.

The NHRC team also summoned Sterlite officials and the residents of its quarters who were affected during the riots. Another team visited Thoothukudi Government Medical College and Hospital and met the injured persons whom they could not meet on Sunday. The five-member team will continue inquiries in Tuticorin till Thursday.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Panel begins probe into Tuticorin incidents

tnn | Jun 5, 2018, 12.41 AM IST

Tuticorin: Retired high court judge Aruna Jagadeesan, appointed by the state government as the commission to probe the police firing and killing of 13 people during the anti-Sterlite protest on May 22 in Tuticorin, visited the city on Monday to begin preliminary inquiries. She assured secrecy on the identity of those testifying before the commission and a fair probe to ensure that justice was not denied.

She told reporters that the deadline for submitting written affidavits on the incident had been extended from June 22 to June 30. "Affidavits can be submitted at the head office of the commission on Greenways Road, Kumarasamy Raja Road, NCB 28, or the camp office at the Old Circuit House in Tuticorin. The offices would be open from 10.30 am to 6 pm and those feeling uncomfortable in submitting the affidavits in Tuticorin could do so at Chennai," she said.

Four staff members, including a retired district judge and a retired court employee besides two government staff deputed from the collectorate, would be present at the camp office from Monday. She said that those who had seen the incidents in person, affected people and their kin and others who had a fair idea on the incidents including those from voluntary organisations could submit the affidavits.

She said that they had received no affidavits till date and those received would be segregated into three phases and the persons examined individually. "Those injured in the incident, kin of those who got killed and the public will be examined in the first phase. In the second phase, eyewitnesses, activists, those who know about the incident and journalists will be inquired," Aruna Jagadeesan said. In the final phase, the commission would probe the police, those accused of firing at the public, police officers, those who gave orders, doctors who treated the victims in the government hospital, doctors who conducted autopsy on the bodies of the victims, the then district collector, N Venkatesh and then superintendent of police P Mahendran.

The former high court judge said that the commission has asked for unedited videos on the incident from the police and other

government sources. It had also appealed to journalists to submit unedited videos and photographs they had taken on the incidents before and during the riots and police firing. "I will be in Tuticorin for three to four days every week when the probe commences," she said.

On reaching Tuticorin in the morning, Jagadeesan chaired a preliminary discussion with district collector Sandeep Nanduri, inspector general of police for south zone Shailesh Kumar Yadav, deputy inspector general of police for Tirunelveli range Kapil Kumar Saratkar and Tuticorin district superintendent of police Murali Rambha. She visited the injured persons undergoing treatment at Thoothukudi medical college and hospital. On Tuesday, the commission will visit places affected by the violence including the district collectorate, the neighbouring Sterlite employees' quarters and the VVD signal where the riots began.

NHRC probe under way



STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 06, 2018 00:00 IST

NHRC probe

under way

A five-member team of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) continued its probe into the police firing here on Tuesday.

Investigation reached its third day.

The riot left 13 dead and several others injured. The riot ravaged Thoothukudi and caused damage to over 60 vehicles, mostly on the premises of Collectorate and other parts of the city.

During the investigation, which took off in the west zone building of Thoothukudi Corporation, the team comprising Vipul Pritto Prasad, Rajvir Singh, Nithin Kumar, Arun Thiyaki and Lal Bahar conducted inquiries with 31 policemen to know the cause of the riot after summons were issued to them.

Besides, the team continued to inquire Deputy Tahsildar Sekar, who was alleged to have lodged a complaint with the Sipcot police against protesters and issued a firing order for the second day. The team also held inquiries with six doctors from Government Medical College Hospital, sources said.

TAMIL NADU

Call for probe by sitting judge

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, JUNE 06, 2018 00:00 IST

The National Confederation of Human Rights Organisations (NCHRO) has sought the dissolution of the one-man commission inquiring into the Thoothukudi firing incident, and has called for a sitting judge to investigate the case.

“Issues such as the use of snipers, the involvement of mufti police in the shootings, and the killing of people belonging to a specific community should be investigated,” the NCHRO said.

When asked about Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami’s statement in the Assembly last week, which made no mention of the firing incident, Prof. A. Marx, president, NCHRO, said, “To say that firing didn’t happen is ridiculous. Even the FIRs say firing happened. There is evidence of bullet injuries.” The NCHRO visited Thoothukudi on a fact-finding mission and has compiled a report on the protests.

T.N. police on trail of Sterlite 'protester'

STAFF REPORTER

KOCHI, JUNE 06, 2018 00:00 IST

A police team from Tamil Nadu visited Aluva recently in search of a person who allegedly hurled bombs at the police during the Sterlite protests in Thoothukudi two weeks ago.

Official sources said the person, identified as Velraj, had been staying at a hideout in Edayapuram near Aluva and the Tamil Nadu police traced his location with the help of the Cyber Cell.

“The four-member police team, comprising a sub-inspector from Thoothukudi, contacted the rural police headquarters and sought our help to locate Velraj, who had been staying somewhere in Edyappuram. By the time they reached here, he had moved to some other location in Thiruvananthapuram district,” said a top officer with the Ernakulam Rural police.

The incident, according to the police, raises concerns about the possibility of criminal elements converting the Ernakulam rural district, a hub of inter-State labourers, into a safe haven.

Left with no other option, the police have now issued directions to the labour contractors in the region to verify the antecedents of people who they recommend for employment.

TAMIL NADU

Rajini echoed Sterlite's voice, says Nallakannu



STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, JUNE 06, 2018 00:00 IST

Blames police for the violence at Kachanatham

Veteran Communist Party of India leader R. Nallakannu on Monday charged that Rajini Makkal Mandram founder Rajinikanth spoke as Sterlite Copper's voice in his recent interview to media after meeting those injured in the anti-Sterlite protests in Thoothukudi.

Interacting with journalists after visiting Kachanatham village in Sivaganga district, which witnessed brutal attack on Dalits by a group of caste Hindus leading to the death of three persons, Mr. Nallakannu said Mr. Rajinikanth had initially condemned the killing of people in police firing during the protest on May 22. "However, within a week, his stance changed. When he visited

Thoothukudi, his voice sounded like the voice of Sterlite,” he charged.

Terming the killing of protesters in Thoothukudi the worst atrocity that Tamil Nadu had ever seen, he blamed the government and the police, in particular, for intentionally “murdering” the protesters.

Stating that the administration’s claim that officials in the rank of Deputy Tahsildars issued the shooting orders was unacceptable, he alleged that the police were still harassing the protesters by foisting cases and arresting them.

On the attack on Dalits in Kachanatham, he said the police failed to protect the families despite complaints against a section of caste Hindus. “The men and women from the oppressed community in the village were doing better educationally and economically. It appears that a few caste Hindu families could not tolerate this,” he said. Urging the police and the district administration to arrest all the accused in the case and ensure punishment for them in the court swiftly, he said the protection of the oppressed community in the village must be ensured. “The government must also arrange for all basic amenities in the village,” he said.

TAMIL NADU

Commission begins inquiry



STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 06, 2018 00:00 IST

Justice Aruna Jegadeesan, the retired Madras High Court judge heading a Commission of Inquiry into the Thoothukudi violence and police firing, on Tuesday met bereaved family members of victims, who were killed during the anti-Sterlite agitation and interacted with them.

The Commission launched its preliminary inquiry since Monday after Justice Aruna Jegadeesan initially met the injured, who are being treated in Thoothukudi Government Medical College Hospital.

Subsequently, she got access to houses of Kandaiya, Ceylon Colony, Ranjith Kumar of Pushpa Nagar and Shanmugam of Masilamanipuram - who were killed in the riot, and held inquiries. The Commission met rest of the families of deceased victims on Tuesday and inquired about the cause of death, sources said.

During her brief stay in their houses, she asked the family members and relatives not to be apprehensive of filing affidavits and sharing facts about what had happened and affected them.

Investigators would talk to more witnesses and people need not hesitate to offer witnesses through affidavits, which could be received till June 30. As of now, the camp office, to receive affidavits from witnesses, is getting ready at the old circuit house in Thoothukudi. The officials concerned had been instructed to expedite the work.

Later, she went to Threspuram, a coastal hamlet, and held inquiries with residents for about 20 minutes. She requested the electronic media to keep off the locality so as to maintain secrecy of information.

According to sources from Government Hospital here, 31 persons, who sustained injuries in the riot, are under treatment and 17 other injured victims were discharged from the hospital on Tuesday. Sources from Department of Revenue said compensation of Rs. 20 lakh to each of the eight deceased victims had so far been given to their families and efforts were on to offer compensation to other victims.

ORDER BY MADURAI BENCH

Anti-Sterlite protests: HC grants conditional bail to Vanchinathan

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Madurai

THE Madurai Bench of Madras High Court granted conditional bail to advocate Vanchinathan who was arrested on charges of instigating violence on the 100th day of anti-Sterlite protest in Thoothukudi on May 22.

The petitioner S Vanchinathan, an advocate and State Coordinator of the People's Rights Protection Centre, was booked under sections 147 (Punishment for rioting), 148 (Rioting, armed with deadly weapon), 188 (Disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), 353 (Assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) and 506 (Punishment for criminal intimidation) of the IPC in connection with his role in the anti-Sterlite protest in Thoothukudi.

In total, nine cases had been registered against him by Thoothukudi police and he was later arrested on June 20 after the High Court Bench denied him anticipatory bail.

While Vanchinathan was in

remand, he approached the Bench seeking bail, denying that his role was fabricated by the police in the FIR. Pointing out the flaws in the charges framed against him, he sought bail.

Opposing it, the AAG Chelapandian, on behalf of the police contending that if given bail, Vanchinathan may involve in more anti-Sterlite activities which might lead to disruption of peace in Thoothukudi district.

Justice G R Swaminathan, hearing the arguments, granted bail to Vanchinathan, on certain conditions that the advocate should not verbally or physically involve in any anti-Sterlite activities and that he should not leave Madurai and appear before the police officials concerned when summoned. The Judge further permitted the police to register any subsequent cases against Vanchinathan if required but cannot arrest him under the cases when he is out on bail.

Vanchinathan was also granted bail in another case registered against him by Kodaikanal police in 2015.



'HC judge must probe into pre-planned Sterlite firing'

A ARUL PALANI IDC
CHENNAI, JUNE 5

Alleging that police firing against anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi on May 22 was a pre-planned assault, the National Confederation of Human Rights Organisations (NCHRO), Chennai, has urged the government to form a judicial probe under a sitting high court judge.

Speaking to mediapersons in Chennai on Tuesday, president of NCHRO, A. Marx, a rights activist and leader of a fact finding team, which conducted study on the police fire at Thoothukudi recently, said the police opened fire against the protesters without any provocation. Colluding with Centre, the state government had resorted to the extreme action only to support the



President of National Confederation of Human Rights Organisations (NCHRO) A. Marx presenting the report of a fact finding team to mediapersons in Chennai on Tuesday on police firing. —DC

Sterlite. This was done to terrify the masses and prevent them from opposing corporates in the future.

The 12-member team, includes social activists and advocates, met the victims and local residents in Thoothukudi and neighbouring villages on May 27

and 28.

Presenting the final report of the committee, Marx said that the judicial probe set up by the government under leadership of former high court judge would not bring out facts behind the shoot out and render justice. Instead, the

government should form a judicial probe under the leadership of a sitting HC judge, Marx demanded.

Denying presence of anti-social elements or extremists, he said that volunteers from Makkal Adhikaram and Revolutionary Youth Force took part in the protest. They were not anti-social elements. From the beginning the protesters kept the political parties away from their agitation. Many leaders took part in their individual capacity and not as a leader of a political party. The anti-Sterlite agitation was a people's movement and outsiders had no role in the protest.

During the 100 daylong struggle, the people took part in the protest with their children, women and elders. On May 22 everyone in the family took part in

the agitation demanding immediate closure of Sterlite.

Marx said, "if they planned to cause violence and arson, they would not have taken their children to protest venue". The police created situation as though protesters caused violence. Agreeing that some of the protesters pelted stones at police and burnt vehicles, he said the police failed to control the crowd. However, even before the protesters entered collectorate, they noticed fire on the campus. The snipers, in plainclothes, selected their target and shot them at close range.

Over 200 cops in plainclothes were seen among the protestors on May 22. ASP Selvanagarathinam and Sipcot police inspector Hariharan played a crucial role in the attack against the protesters. In addition

to the existing GO passed by the government to close down the Sterlite, he said the government should pass additional GO to close the unit permanently.

NCHRO has urged the government to hike the solatium granted to the family members of the deceased to ₹1 crore from ₹20 lakh and provide employment opportunity to a member in the deceased family, distribute Rs 20 lakh to those who were injured and meet their medical expense. The NCHRO also demanded the government to withdraw cases registered against protesters including T. Velmurugan leader of Tamizhaga Vazhvirimai Katchi. They also sought the authorities to register murder case against the authorities who were involved ordering police fire.

CONG SEEKS ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION ON STERLITE

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 5

Contending that the argument that Assembly resolution is subject to judicial review does not hold water in all cases, the Congress whip S. Vijayadharani has demanded the TN government to reconsider its decision and adopt a unanimous resolution in the Assembly on permanently shutting Vedanta group's Sterlite plant in Thoothukudi.

Raising the issue in the Assembly on Tuesday, Ms. Vijayadharani said the resolution on Sterlite closure if passed in the Assembly, contrary to what has been said, would grab the attention of the court to the issue.

"The Law Minister's (C. Ve. Shanmugam) comparison of the resolution on permanent closure of Sterlite plant with the Assembly resolution (in 2011) seeking recommending commutation of death sentence for Rajiv Gandhi assassins which had gone to the court, are



two different issues and does not hold water. In the resolution involving the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the Supreme Court has asked the Centre to respond within three months to the Tamil Nadu government's decision to release the seven convicts," she said.

As an advocate she has been following several cases closely and in her opinion a unanimous resolution adopted in the Assembly ordering permanent closure of Sterlite's copper smelter plant would withstand judicial review, she claimed.

Thoothukudi firing: HC orders autopsy on remaining 6 bodies

Chennai: The Madras High Court on Tuesday made it clear that post-mortem on six bodies out of the 13 people killed in police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters in Tuticorin has to be carried out according to the court's earlier directions.

On May 30, a vacation bench had passed an interim order on conducting re-postmortem on seven other bodies with stringent guidelines to be followed. It also directed that it be conducted in the presence of a doctor either from the Aims or from Jipmer, Puducherry, or any other doctor from Government Hospital at Trivandrum.

Immediately after the pronouncement of the order, the counsel for petitioners (some families of the deceased) raised objections for not allotting any doctor of their choice and sought one week's time to approach the Supreme Court.

Advocate General Vijay Narayan submitted today that according to the request made by the counsel, the order was kept in abeyance for one week with regard to autopsy on the remaining six bodies.

The counsel approached the Supreme Court and the apex court said there was no urgency and a petition may be filed after the vacation. —PTI

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

NHRC team questions former Tuticorin collector at airport

TNN | Jun 6, 2018, 01.35 AM IST



MADURAI: Former Tuticorin district collector N Venkatesh appeared before the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) at the Madurai airport on Tuesday. Venkatesh had held office during the police shooting that took place in Tuticorin on May 22.

The NHRC team has been in Tuticorin for the past four days and have been conducting an investigation by meeting officials, including current Tuticorin collector Sandeep Nanduri, higher police officials and also the family members of victims and patients, who are undergoing treatment at the Tuticorin government hospital.

Venkatesh was transferred a day after the shooting incident and was replaced by Sandeep Nanduri. Leaders of political parties have been

demanding action against Venkatesh and the then superintendent of police S Mahendran, who was also transferred.

On Tuesday, the NHRC members led by Bhubhul P Prasad, Rajvir Singh, Nithin Kumar, Arun Tyagi and Lal Bahar met the former collector at a room in the Madurai airport. Inquiries went for about an hour from 11 am onwards. DIG (Madurai range) Pradeep Kumar was also summoned to the airport and questioned by the team.

Meanwhile, the one man commission, retired Judge Aruna Jagadeesan carried out her second day of inquiries with the family members of the shooting victims- Karthik, Maniraj and Snowlin. She later conducted a field visit to the sites where violence occurred, including the Tuticorin district collectorate and Sterlite staff quarters.

All cases registered in connection with the anti-Sterlite protest violence have been transferred to the five teams led by CB-CID DSPs. They are to investigate the cases which took places in five different places in the district

TAMIL NADU

Postmortem conducted on bodies of six victims



STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 07, 2018 00:00 IST

Only one body is yet to be handed over to the relatives

Postmortem examination was conducted on the bodies of six of the victims of the deadly violence that occurred during an anti-Sterlite rally on May 22, at Thoothukudi Government Medical College Hospital here on Wednesday.

Police personnel were deployed in the vicinity of the hospital ahead of the arrival of a team of doctors, who performed the postmortem in the presence of Vinod Chaudhari, Associate Professor, Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, JIPMER, Puducherry.

Tahsildar Sivakami said the postmortem examination was carried out, in accordance with the directives of the Madras High Court, on the bodies of S. Maniraj, 34, B. Ranjith Kumar, 23, K. Gladstone, 42, Janci, 45, N.

Jeyaraman, 42, and Antony Selvaraj, 46. Following the procedure, five bodies were handed over to the relatives concerned for the performing of last rites. The body of Antony Selvaraj was yet to be handed over to his relatives, the Tahsildar said.

A re-postmortem examination was carried out on seven bodies a few days ago.

Compensation

The Tahsildar said Rs. 20 lakh was given as compensation to the kin of each of the deceased victims, adding that the injured were also given relief as stipulated by the State government. Sources from the GH said that currently, 31 victims who were injured in the violence were undergoing treatment there.

Meanwhile, the Inquiry Commission led by retired Madras High Court judge Justice Aruna Jegadeesan, carried out inspections at riot-hit localities in Anna Nagar, and later in the day, the head of the commission met the bereaved family of Tamilarasan, who was killed in the violence. At the same time, a five-member team from the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) continued its probe for the fourth consecutive day at the West Zone building of Thoothukudi Corporation.

Cancel bail granted to Sterlite protesters: govt. to HC



STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, JUNE 07, 2018 00:00 IST

'Relief order passed without serving notice to prosecution'

The State government filed a petition before the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Wednesday, seeking the cancellation of the bail granted by a vacation sessions court to at least 65 persons involved in the Thoothukudi agitations.

The State, in its petition, said that on May 22, when policemen were returning to the police station after attending a court hearing, their van was attacked by a mob. The police were indiscriminately attacked and suffered injuries as a result.

As many as 65 persons were arrested on May 23 and cases were booked against them under Section 147 (Punishment for rioting), Section 148 (Rioting, armed with deadly weapon), Section 324 (voluntarily causing hurt by

dangerous weapons or means), Section 341 (Punishment for wrongful restraint) and Section 435 (Mischief by fire or explosive substance with intent to cause damage) of the Indian Penal Code and Section 3 of the Tamil Nadu Public Property (Prevention of Damage and Loss) Act, 1992.

The accused were remanded in judicial custody on May 24. However, the accused moved the vacation sessions court on the very same day. The court granted them bail on a bond of Rs. 10,000. However, no notice was served to the prosecution in the case. This could prejudice the law and order situation in the region, the State said.

The State sought the quashing of the bail granted to the 65 persons, stating that by not serving notice to the prosecution, it was denied a chance to offer an explanation in the case. Taking up the petition for hearing, Justice G.R.Swaminathan directed notice to the 65 persons who allegedly attacked the police and adjourned the case for further hearing.

HC orders notice to 3 deputy tahsildars

The officials had ordered cops to fire on Sterlite protestors

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Madurai

MADURAI Bench of Madras High Court directed its registry to implead the three deputy tahsildars, who ordered the police to fire on anti-Sterlite protestors in Thoothukudi, and sought a reply from them.

The directive to implead the deputy tahsildars as respondents in the case was issued by a Bench comprising Justice C T Selvam and A M Basheer Ahmed based on a Public Interest Litigation filed by a Madurai-based advocate, Muthu Amuthanathan. The court also ordered to issue notice to them.

After hearing the arguments of the Additional Advocate General Chellapandian, the Bench noted that there were mistakes on both sides - the police and the protestors - and it would not be fair to accuse just one side and that it would be premature and the stand of the State could not be justified.

The judges said that they would take up the case after the hearing of a batch of petitions that was filed before the Principal seat at Madras High Court.

Earlier the petitioner sought an order to register a case under IPC 302 against the officials who were responsible for the firing and also prayed for an independent inquiry committee.

State govt seeks to cancel bail granted to 65 protestors

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Madurai

CHALLENGING the bail given to the 65 protestors arrested by Thoothukudi police, the State filed a petition seeking to cancel the bail granted to them.

Upon the directions of the Madurai Bench of Madras High Court, Thoothukudi district Judge Charuhasini heard the bail plea of the 65 protested, who were remanded by the police citing their involvement in the riot that happened after the police firing in Thoothukudi.

The district Judge released the arrested protestors in bail, on May 25. Challenging this, on behalf of the State, the Thoothukudi district, Pudukkottai Police Inspector filed a petition challenging the bail granted to the 65 persons and prayed the Court to cancel their bail. Justice G R Swaminathan, ordered notice to the 65 persons and adjourned the case to June 20.



HC orders notice to dy tahsildars over firing

Madurai: The Madras high court bench here on Wednesday observed that the police action during the anti-Sterlite protests could not be justified and directed that three deputy tahsildars, who had reportedly ordered the firing during the stir, be impleaded as respondents and issued notice to them. A division bench of justices C. T. Selvam and Basheer Ahamed was hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) petition, seeking a CBI probe into the firing and violence in Thoothukudi district last month, which claimed 13 lives. The judges, terming the firing “unfortunate”,



said the police action could not be justified and asked the deputy tahsildars to file their counter. During the arguments, the petitioner’s counsel sought registration of murder cases against the deputy tahsildars, saying the firing could not be justified.

—PTI

Autopsy completed on six bodies of Tkudi victims

DC CORRESPONDENT

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 6

Autopsy on the remaining six bodies of those killed in police action during the May 22 Thoothukudi violence were performed and five bodies were handed over to the relatives, while the body of one of the victim is to be received by his family on Thursday.

Following the ruling of Madras high court to perform post-mortem for the six bodies among the 13 killed in police action, the Thoothukudi district administration has made all arrangements to perform autopsy at Thoothukudi government medical college hospital on Wednesday. The relatives of the six gave their consent in writing, following which the post mortem was done on the six bodies by a team of four doctors — Dr Manoharan, Dr Sudalai-muthu, Dr Somasundaram and Dr Mumoorthy of Thoothukudi medical college hospital under the supervision of the Forensic expert Dr Vinoth Chowdry of Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical education and Research (JIPMER).

Four judicial magistrate too were present when the post mortem was performed and the entire process was video graphed.

Elaborate security arrangements were done so as to prevent any untoward incident as the bodies received by the relatives were taken for burial the same day.

Inspector ordered firing in absence of TSO, says FIR

FIR says inspector Meenatchi Sundaram ordered to open the fire

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Thoothukudi

EVEN as Srivaikuntam Taluk Supply Officer (TSO) Gopal denied filing any complaint with the police about the clash that took place at FCI roundabout, the First Information Report (FIR) registered at the south police station says inspector Meenatchi Sundaram had ordered cops to open the fire at the protesters.

A case has been registered against 3000 persons acting on the inspector's complaint at South police station.

Thoothukudi sub-collector MS Prashant had deployed TSO Gopal to look after the situation at Third Mile, P&T colony second street, FCI godown and Cylone colony in Thoothukudi town on May 22 in view of the anti-Sterlite protesters' march to besiege the collectorate campus.

The rally took a violent turn following the police firing, clashes erupted at various places including at FCI godown roundabout. A DSR copy with Express says Gopal was at the sentry duty at the clash site near the FCI godown, and the south police had registered an FIR against 4000 identifiable persons acting on his complaint.

However, Gopal disowned the

complaint, besides, Tamil Nadu Revenue Officials Association (TNROA) in which he was a member, petitioned the district collector seeking genuineness of the FIR. The TNROA's petition has raked up suspicion of manipulations and impersonations.

Ottapidaram police inspector Meenatchi Nathan had acknowledged to have issued orders to open fire at the anti-Sterlite protesters as the unruly mob went on damaging the public and private properties.

In the complaint filed to south police (Crime Branch) inspector Ganesh Kumar, Meenatchi Nathan has claimed that he was policing at FCI godown roundabout when the protesters started turning violent. The protesters attempted to attack the policemen deployed there. He warned the mob twice to disperse over microphone, but the mob paid no heed, he said in the complaint. He added that he had to order the police to open the fire as he could not find Gopal, the divisional magistrate in charge of the location.

Despite shooting in air twice, the mob did not disperse. The, for own safety, the police fired bullets at the crowd which injured few of them and the injured were sent to hospitals in ambulance, his complaint reveals.

Revenue official who ordered firing transferred

Thoothukudi: Collector Sandeep Nanduri has transferred Divisional Excise Officer S Chandran, who gave the shooting order at the anti-Sterlite protesters on May 23, the second day of the clash. According to sources, Chandran has been transferred to the town land property department with immediate effect. The order states that he should take charge immediately. Chandran had reportedly issued the order to the police to open the fire during the post Thoothukudi gunfire violence happened at Anna Nagar on May 23.



I was policing at FCI godown roundabout when the protesters started turning violent. As they turned against the cops, I warned twice over microphone, but the mob paid no heed

Inspector Meenatchi Nathan



Tension in Thoothukudi subsiding; bodies of all victims laid to rest

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Thoothukudi

SEVENTEEN days after the police firing, the district administration, on Thursday, handed over the body of victim Anthony Selvaraj (46), from Velankanni Nagar, to his relatives here. Scores of people, friends and relatives attended the funeral held at the St Ignatius Church near Krishnarajapuram here. Notable personalities who participated in the funeral procession included Kollywood director Hari and actor Stunt Silva.

District Collector Sandeep Nanduri, in a press release, said that the compensation of Rs 20 lakh had been given to the families of all the 13 victims.

A three-member doctor team, headed by a forensic and toxicology expert from JIPMER, performed the post-mortem on all the bodies, as per the directions of the Madras High Court to comply with the guidelines of Supreme Court in such cases.

Subsequently, the seven bodies that had already been autopsied by the medical college doctors were subjected to a re-post-mortem and handed over to their relatives on May 31 and June 1. Later, the remaining six bodies were handed over to their relatives after a post-mortem performed on June 6.

With the bodies of all the gun-fire victims laid to rest, the tension prevailing in Thoothukudi since the police firing has subsided.

The authorities are likely to withdraw the extra police forces that had been called in.

It may be recalled that following the police firing that killed 13 protesters and responding to the public aggression over the functioning of the copper smelter in Thoothukudi, the state government had issued a government order to shut down the unit, on May 28.

Anti-Sterlite Movement leader Thamilmadhan said that the 13 victims had sacrificed their lives for the cause of the people and will be remembered forever. He also condemned the police action and demanded severe action against those who injured and killed the protesters.

Clarification

A story titled 'I had no intention of killing anyone, says police officer' that appeared in these columns wrongly attributed the quote to police. It was made by a deputy tahsildar. The error is regretted.

Sterlite's statement

Sterlite officials scotched rumours doing the rounds claiming the firm's CEO had said that it would resume operations soon. They said the CEO had not made any such comment and their priority was peace in the town.



DEMAND FOR | CBI PROBE ■ **Inquiry commission is an eye-wash, says Stalin**

DMK walks out of Assembly, again

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JULY 7

The opposition DMK made a vain bid to raise the violence during the anti-Sterlite protests in Thoothukudi, in the Assembly yet again, but staged a walkout after they were refused to speak on the subject since an enquiry into the incidents is on and also because the matter is sub judice.

Declining permission to raise the issue in the Assembly, Speaker P. Dhanapal said much has been said on the subject and Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami had even responded by giving a detailed reply in the Assembly.



M.K Stalin along with party members addresses the media outside the Assembly. —DC

Much of what the DMK working president M. K. Stalin said on the May 22 incidents were expunged from Assembly records. Protesting against not being allowed to raise the issue, Stalin, accompanied by his party members

staged a walkout.

Later, Mr. Palaniswami said the DMK should approach the one-person enquiry commission headed by retired judge of the Madras High Court Justice Aruna Jagadesan, probing the violence, and make a

submission before her. Stating a case relating to the issue was pending before the Madras High Court, the CM said it was normal practice not to debate issues that were sub judice, in the Assembly. Quoting Assembly rules,

the Speaker said there would be no discussion on matters being probed by an inquiry panel.

Later, speaking to reporters outside the Assembly, Stalin alleged the enquiry commission was an "eye-wash." Demanding a CBI probe into the May 22 incidents, he said his party would approach the court on the subject. When pointed out that the CM had clearly stated that issues that are sub judice could not be raised in the Assembly, Mr. Stalin shot back, "then why should we come to the Assembly.. this inquiry commission itself is an eye-wash. We don't accept it. Therefore we insist that the CBI should probe the matter."

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Anti-Sterlite protests: Cops told not to arrest lawyers

TNN | Jun 8, 2018, 12.47 AM IST



MADURAI: The Madurai bench of the Madras high court has directed police to refrain from arresting two advocates accused by the police of engineering the protests against Sterlite in Tuticorin. Justice GR Swaminathan before whom the anticipatory bail plea of the advocates came up on Thursday adjourned the hearing to June 14.

Police have registered more than 10 cases against the advocates - S Vanchinathan of Madurai and Hari Raghavan of Tuticorin, alleging that the duo played a major role in engineering the protests. Both the advocates are functionaries of an outfit - Makkal Urimai Paadhugaapu Maiyam. Tuticorin police had booked cases under various sections of IPC including 506 (2) (Criminal intimidation), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharging duty) and Section 3 of the Tamil Nadu Property

(prevention of damages and loss) act. While Hari Raghavan practices before the district court in Tuticorin, Vanchinathan is an advocate at the Madurai bench.

The counsel for the advocates contended that both of them were in the riot-hit coastal town only to provide legal assistance and advice to the anti-Sterlite people federation and sought anticipatory bail. Further, in the bail petition, they said that they were in no way connected to the violent actions as mentioned in the FIR and submitted that police acted to stifle their voices.

Additional advocate general, K Chellapandian, representing the state expressed strong opposition to the bail petition and argued that both of them engineered the violent protests.

Directing the state counsel to submit material evidence of the duo engineering the violence, the court adjourned the petition and directed the authorities to not arrest the advocates until then.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Advocates condemn state's handling of anti-Sterlite protests

TNN | Jun 8, 2018, 12.40 AM IST

MADURAI: Members of the Madurai Bench High Court Advocates Association (MBHAA) staged a protest outside the Madurai bench campus on Thursday condemning the state's handling of the anti-Sterlite protesters. Around 40 advocates including president of MBHAA, A John Vincent gathered outside the court premises around 10am and raised slogans condemning the government.

The advocates said that the state's move to appoint a one-woman inquiry commission by retired high court judge Aruna Jagadeesan to probe the events that led to police firing in which 13 people were killed is to divert the attention from the state's shortcomings.

"Revoke the commission. It is unnecessary as the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is already conducting an inquiry," Vincent said.

Refusing to buy the state's version that three deputy tahsildars ordered the police firing, the advocates said that they would battle it out to find out who ordered the firing.

The advocates also demanded that petitions filed before the Madurai bench concerning the Sterlite issue should not be transferred to the principal seat in Chennai.

Though the gathering was to condemn the state's actions, the lawyers shared words of praise for the magistrates and advocates in Tuticoirn who worked tirelessly after the firing incident and rendered legal aid to the victims.

Public can submit facts, evidences till June 30

Officials had earlier fixed June 22 as last date to receive affidavits

Officials who ordered police firing transferred

Thoothukudi: The district administration has transferred eight tahsildars including two officers who ordered the police to open fire at the anti-Sterlite protesters, a move that killed 13 civilians here. The tahsildars who were transferred include R Sivakumar, S Vadivel Kumar, R Baskaran, M Ananth, M Kannan, P Sekar, T Ramakrishnan and R Selvaboopathy. The zonal deputy tahsildar M Kannan who issued the order to open fire at the protesters on May 22 has been transferred to Kayathar while special tahsildar P Sekar has been transferred to Srivakuntam. The government had on June 6 transferred revenue official S Chandran, who ordered the police to shoot at the protesters at Anna Nagar, to town land property tax collection department.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Thoothukudi

THE State government has extended the deadline for submitting affidavits on evidences and facts against the Thoothukudi police firing to the one-man commission headed by retired high court judge Aruna Jegadeesan till June 30.

Earlier, the public was asked to submit grievances, evidences and facts about the police firing and the violence to the commission on or before June 22. However, the district administration in a press statement said that the public can submit the evidences and facts in the form of affidavit to the commission till June 30.

As 13 persons were gunned down during the anti-Sterlite protests here on May 22, the state government formed an inquiry commission to probe the

incident. Jegadeesan begun the investigations on June 4.

The head office of the commission has been established at Greenways road in Chennai while a camp office was set up at Circuit House located at South Beach road here. The building is owned by the Public Works department.

Meanwhile, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) had June 6 winded up its investigations with the relatives of the dead victims and those injured in the police firing.

The the National Human Rights Commission also quizzed the revenue officials deployed at crucial spots, and the police personnel who opened fire at the protesters and the officials who were injured during the clash with the anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi on May 22 and 23.



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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Sterlite row: Post-police firing transfer of officials continues in Tuticorin

TNN | Jun 9, 2018, 11.12 AM IST



MADURAI: The transfer of officials, who were held directly and indirectly responsible for the police firing at the mob during the anti-Sterlite protests in Tuticorin city on May 22 and 23, continues more than two weeks after the incident. Firing by the police claimed 13 lives while the police assault and riots left more than 150 persons injured.

On Friday district collector Sandeep Nanduri ordered transfer of two officers in the rank of zonal deputy tahsildars within the district. Their transfer is among the six other transfers issued in the same order that day. M Kannan, zonal deputy tahsildar of Tuticorin, was transferred as the zonal deputy tahsildar of Kayathar.

P Sekar, the deputy tahsildar (election) in Tuticorin, has been transferred as the zonal deputy tahsildar of Srivaikuntam. On Wednesday, zonal excise officer S Chandran (divisional excise officer) was transferred and posted as special tahsildar for city tax collection. His transfer was among the three such transfers ordered in the district that day.

According to the FIRs registered by the Tuticorin district police, firing began after the mob turned violent on May 22 and 23 based on the directions of the three officers mentioned. The FIR stated that Sekar ordered firing at the collectorate on May 22 morning, while Kannan ordered the firing at Therespuram the same evening.

Chandran ordered the firing at Anna Nagar the following day. Revenue officials said these officials were not targeted in the

transfers and they didn't find fault with it.

Transfer of officials involved in the incident began with then district collector N Venkatesh and then superintendent of police P Mahendran being shunted out on May 24. A few days later, Hariharan, the inspector of SIPCOT police station that has jurisdiction over the collectorate where the firing began, was transferred.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

PIL seeks to preserve guns, bullets used in Tuticorin firing

TNN | Jun 9, 2018, 12.40 AM IST

Madurai: A Tuticorin resident on Friday approached the Madurai bench of the Madras high court urging the court to issue directions to preserve the weapons and bullets used in the police firing in Tuticorin during the anti-Sterlite protests. The first bench comprising C T Selvam and A M Basheer Ahmed allowed the public interest litigation (PIL) and directed it to be listed with other petitions on the Sterlite issue.

Thirteen people were killed in police firing and more than a hundred injured when protests against the Sterlite plant turned violent on May 22 and May 23. Stating that the investigation by the state's CB-CID is nothing but an eyewash, the petitioner, Henry Thomas, 54, also wanted the investigation in the case to be shifted to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to ensure a non-partisan probe.

It was essential, the petitioner contended, that the state should abide by a 2014 Supreme Court judgement in which guidelines were framed to be followed whenever a police encounter took place. "The police has to recover and preserve blood-stained earth, hair, fibres and ensure that intact fingerprints of deceased are sent for chemical analysis. The police officers concerned must surrender weapons for forensic and ballistic analysis," the PIL stated quoting from the SC guidelines.

The Madurai bench had already stated that it will not rush at anything and wait for the outcome of the petitions filed on the issue pending before the first bench of the Madras high court.

TAMIL NADU

Anti-Sterlite protesters held

STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 11, 2018 00:00 IST

Nine persons, who were reportedly anti-Sterlite protesters, were picked up for interrogation here on Sunday. Esakkidurai, a cadre of Naam Tamilar Katchi, Mahesh of A. Kumareddiyapuram, and Pandi of Pandarampatti were named among those held.

They were accused of instigating people to lodge protests against the company. In the aftermath of the recent police firing, which left 13 dead and several others injured, on May 22 in Thoothukudi, 243 cases were filed against rioters. Among the injured, 102 were rioters and 99 were police personnel, sources said.

Anti-Sterlite stir: NTK men among nine detained

Party zonal president Isakki Durai and 8 others in police custody

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Thoothukudi

THE police have reportedly taken nine persons including Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) zonal president Isakki Durai, the party's office-bearer Packiaraj and seven others into custody for inquiry in connection with the Thoothukudi protests on Saturday.

According to the sources, the nine were taken into custody by a police team on Saturday night. Apart from the NTK office-bearers, the police also took seven persons including one Mahesh from A Kumarettiyapuram and one Pandi from Pandarampatti

Anti-Sterlite

The police had arrested NTK state coordinator A Viyanarasu in connection with Thoothukudi clashes which broke out as the police opened fire at the anti-sterlite protesters on May 22

into custody.

The police had already arrested NTK state coordinator A Viyanarasu in connection with Thoothukudi clashes which broke out as the police opened fire at the anti-sterlite protesters'

rally on May 22.

Hundreds of vehicles and public properties were set ablaze when the rally turned violent after the police firing. As many as 13 were killed and hundreds of people sustained injuries ranging from bullet shots to bone fractures.

After days of unrest across the Thoothukudi town, all the 13 bodies were handed over to the relatives of the deceased persons after postmortem. As normalcy returned to the town, the police have intensified the process of arresting persons who allegedly had connection with the incidents.



INTOLERANCE, SAYS EX FM

People protesting during Cong rule were not shot: PC

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 10

Accusing the government of not being 'tolerant' to protests, Congress leader and former Union Minister P. Chidambaram has alleged that people are living in trepidation of repressive measures. Such qualms, he claimed had never prevailed during the decade of UPA rule in the country.

He also demanded that the State government fix the onus on who had ordered the police to open fire at the protesters in Thoothukudi on May 22.

"There were protests and

● **"The government ought to fix responsibility on those who had ordered the police to open fire at the protesters"**

— P. CHIDAMBARAM
Former Union minister



demonstrations on various issues during the ten years of the Congress-led UPA regime and people had the right to protest or criticise the government then but now protesters are shot dead. People are living in fear now," he said, condemning the Thoothukudi firing inci-

dent during the people's rally demanding closure of the Sterlite plant.

Speaking at a Congress rally in Karaikudi on Saturday night he said the government ought to fix responsibility on those who had ordered the police to open fire at the protesters. ■ **P4**

Government not tolerant to protestors:Chidambaram

FROM P1

“There are rules to be followed for police while handling protesters. Police should shoot below the knees but in Thoothukudi some of those killed had been shot in the chest. Three poor tahsildars have been transferred claiming they had ordered the police to open fire during the anti-Sterlite protest rally,” the former Union Minister said and asked if the transfer of the tahsildars the real solution. “Do not the district police or district collector, DIG or the Minister have any responsibility,” he asked.

Mr. Chidambaram alleged that minorities and dalits lived in fear and people could not even move around freely or start a business of their choice, due to the dominance of right wing forces. The economic scenario too was far from satisfactory. The Indian economy was now running on a ‘single wheel’ after tyres of three wheels - export growth, bank loans for industries and industrial growth - were punctured, he alleged. He pointed out that the nation’s economic growth, which was 8.2 % in 2015-16, declined to 6.7 % in 2017-18.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Tuticorin 'fire-fighters' get rewarded with plum posts

TNN | Jun 10, 2018, 09.29 AM IST



CHENNAI: IPS officers, K P Shanmugarajeshwaran and Davidson S Devasirvatham, who played a pivotal role as pacifiers to bring back normalcy in Tuticorin in the aftermath of the police firing in the port city on May 22, have been transferred and given plum posts in southern Tamil Nadu.

IGP Devasirvatham has been posted as the new police commissioner of Madurai city, while Shanmugarajeshwaran was posted as the south zone IGP replacing Saileshkumar Yadav, who has been posted as the IGP of armed reserve in Chennai.

Maheshkumar Agarwal has been posted as the IGP in CB-CID, while S Manoharan, who worked as special security group officer, has been

promoted as IGP and posted as Tirupur city police commissioner. IGP P Nagarajan has been posted as the IGP training in Ashok Nagar.

Deputy inspector general of police J Bhaskaran has been promoted as IGP and posted as the IGP operations in Chennai. IGP S N Seshasai has been posted as IGP welfare in the DGP office, IGP N Baskaran has been posted as the IGP of the Tamil Nadu Police Academy in Oonamanchery, DIG of police Dr Mahender Kumar Rathod has been posted as the Tirunelveli city police commissioner, while DIG of police of training has been posted as the DIG technical services.

Soon after the police firing escalated and spread across all the other parts of the state, and police personnel searched for key suspects including the members of Makkal Athigaram and few lawyers who mobilised protesters from other cities in the state.

The state government sent three IGPs to bring back normalcy in the city. IGPs Devasirvatham (police welfare department), S Varadharaju (central zone) and Rajeshwaran (police training college in Ashok Nagar) were assigned to handle law and order, chase the suspects behind the protests and conduct peace committee meetings with the villagers. A senior police officer said the three police officers managed to bring the situation under control and prevented the protests from spreading across the state.

TAMIL NADU

New job website for Sterlite workers

Hari Prasad A. R.

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 12, 2018 00:00 IST

Thoothukudi Collector Sandeep Nanduri on Monday said that a website would be created to provide alternative employment for workers hit by the closure of the Sterlite Copper plant.

The website would serve as a meeting point for employers and job-seekers.

“We are in talks with companies in Thoothukudi to help with their employment. We’ll try to match requirement of the companies depending on the workers’ skills and educational qualifications,” said Mr. Nanduri.

The Collector said that a counselling camp for those who were affected by the May 22 violence during the anti-Sterlite protests has been opened at the Threspuram Primary Health Centre.

The death certificates and a solatium amount of Rs. 20 lakh have been given to the families of 13 people, who died during the May 22 protests, the Collector said. Job recommendations for those who suffered permanent disability would be made to the State government after medical certificates are obtained, he added.

Govt keen to provide jobs to kin of gunfire victims: Collector

District administration planning to launch web portal for Sterlite employees who have lost their jobs; providing loan to set up business ventures being considered

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Thoothukudi

DISTRICT Collector Sandeep Nanduri said that the government was keen on providing a government job for a member from each of the families of the thirteen people who died in the police firing during the police shootout on May 22.

Officials in the rank of tahsildars have been designated to follow up with the families of each of the victims, Nanduri said at a press brief during the weekly grievance redress meeting held here, on Monday.

Nanduri said that the district administration has been working towards restoring normal life for the families of the people who were killed or injured during the police firing. Forty-three persons suffered major injuries while 74

sustained minor injuries in the incident and during the lathicharge following the event, he said.

While the relatives of the 13 deceased have received the ₹20 lakh relief announced by the government, some of the injured are yet to get a compensation. The government had announced ₹5 lakh

Tahsildar-level officers had been designated to follow-up with the families of the deceased. They will ensure that the families are provided with all the certificates required for further course of action

Sandeep Nanduri, Collector

compensation for those with major injuries and ₹1.5 lakh for those with minor injuries. Many of the injured are taking treatment at various private hospitals, and the officials are yet to get a consolidated picture, said Nanduri.

Tahsildar-level officers had

been designated to follow-up with the families of the deceased. They will ensure that the bereaved families will be provided with all the certificates required for further course of action, said the Collector. "The officials will interact with the families of the injured and learn about their re-

quirements. If need be, a loan for starting a petty shop or a small business, or a job opportunity will be arranged for," he said.

Regarding the claim that at least 28 are disabled permanently, Nanduri said that he was not sure of the number of people permanently disabled. "However,

doctors will assess the percentage of disability and remedial measures will be taken accordingly," he stated.

Nanduri also informed that the district administration has planned to launch a web portal for Sterlite employees who have lost their jobs due to the closure of the plant. The employees may submit their job profiles in the portal and eligible candidates will be asked to fill vacancies in other companies, he added.

When asked about the ongoing arrest of anti-Sterlite agitation leaders and active participants during midnight, the Collector said that only those involved in the violence were being escorted for inquiry. The police have been picking up persons allegedly owing allegiance to the anti-Sterlite agitation during midnight and pre-dawn searches.

6 cadre of Makkal Adhikaram detained under NSA over protests

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Thoothukudi

IN a major development in the police firing incident and the subsequent violence in Thoothukudi over the anti-Sterlite protests, the police on Sunday detained six persons belonging to the Makkal Adhikaram under the National Security Act (NSA).

Thoothukudi Superintendent of Police Murali Rambha told Express that the order of

detention had been served to the six persons — Kaleel Rahman, Mohammed Younis, Mohammed Ishraf, Velmurugan, Saravanan and Sottaiyan — who had already been arrested on May 26. They are currently lodged in Palayamkottai central prison in Tirunelveli in a case related to the anti-Sterlite protests. The police firing at the protesters during a rally on May 22 had left 13 persons killed and several others injured. A huge crowd of

Thoothukudi residents participated in the rally demanding a permanent closure of the Sterlite Copper unit over environmental and pollution concerns. Even the United Nations had condemned the unscrupulous firing at the innocent crowd who took out a march to lay siege to the Collectorate to press their demands. Over 180 cases have so far been filed against the protesters at different police stations in Thoothukudi.



TN to help people who lost jobs in Sterlite inc

M. ARULOLI | DC

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 11

Special committees are to be constituted to identify developmental programmes for villages around the private copper smelter plant in Thoothukudi.

The district administration is also committed to the rehabilitation of employees of Sterlite that has been closed down and plans to create a website to help employees of Sterlite find alternative jobs.

As normalcy is returning after the May 22 riot that resulted in the killing of 13 people in police action and around 102 injured, the district adm-

inistration now plans to go ahead to the next step of rehabilitating villagers around the copper smelter plant. "Already we have been taking up special developmental projects in the affected villages around the plant using the interest from the fine of ₹100 crore paid by the company in 2013," said Thoothukudi district collector Sandeep Nanduri. He added that now a special committee is to be constituted to identify the special needs of villagers, based on which the district administration will recommend the implementation of job oriented programmes to help youth in the affected villages.

■ Panel to draw development schemes

TN to help people who lost jobs in Sterlite inc

M. ARULOLI | DC

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He added that now a special committee is to be constituted to identify the special needs of villagers, based on which the district administration will recommend the implementation of job oriented programmes to help youth in the affected villages. Steps have been report-

edly taken to reclaim agricultural lands and groundwater in the region around the copper smelter plant.

To help those who worked in Sterlite find alternative jobs, the district administration has taken the initiative on the direction of the Chief Minister, Mr. Edappadi K Palaniswami, himself.

“We are to create a website in which employees who lost their jobs in Sterlite as the company is permanently closed, can register their profile so that the district administration can refer them to other factories in the district for suitable jobs,” said the collector Nanduri.

SIX MAKKAL ADHIKARAM MEN HELD UNDER NSA

M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 11

In a fresh development, six men owing allegiance to 'Makkal Adhikaram' were detained under National Security Act (NSA) for allegedly involving in arson and violence during the May 22 riots in Thoothukudi as the anti-Sterlite protests turned violent that day.

The six functionaries — Kaleel Rahman, Mohammed Younis, Mohammed Ishraf of Melapalayam, 65-km away from Thoothukudi, Velmurugan and Saravanan of Kovilpatti and Sottaiyan from Madurai, were arrested and lodged at Palayamkottai central prison for involvement in the May 22 riots. ■ P4

6 men suspected to have resorted to arson on May 22

FROM P1

As these six men were later found to have instigated violence, attacked the police and involved in arson, the district collector on the instruction of the State Home Secretary, Mr. Niranjan Mardi, ordered their detention under the NSA.

Similarly, the special police parties investigating the violence have also picked up ten others—Makesh of Kumareddiyapuram, Paulraj of Kumareddiyapuram, Satheesh and Murugesan of Makkal Adhikaram from Oththakadai in Madurai, Gladwin of Panimayanagara, Thoothukudi, Ponraj of Bryantnagar, Thoothukudi, Naam Tamilar Katchi functionaries, Esakkidurai, Pakiyaraj and Pandi of Thoothukudi and Poovalingam of Puthiyamputhur.

The ten men were remanded and sent to Palayamkottai central prison, according to the police, who added that those allegedly involved in violence on May 22 and 23 were being identified by keenly watching the CCTV footage and the video clippings and photographs collected from various sources.

However, condemning the arrest of Makesh and Paulraj of Kumareddiyapuram, around 10 villagers from Kumareddiyapuram, that was the epicenter of the anti-Sterlite protest since February, petitioned the district collector demanding the withdrawal of all the cases slapped on the youths of their village. The Kumareddiyapuram villagers also complained that many in their village have been still held under wrongful custody, without producing them in the court.

The Thoothukudi district collector, Sandeep Nanduri, later responding to this complaint of the Kumareddiyapuram villagers, denied the allegations and added, “no arbitrary arrest was made and no innocent person has been arrested so far.” “However we cannot prevent the police from picking up people against whom the police have proper evidences,” added the district collector.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Six Tuticorin protesters booked under NSA

TNN | Jun 12, 2018, 12.30 AM IST



Six people, who were arrested in connection with the violence during the anti-Sterlite protests in Tuticorin, have been detained under the National Security Act on the orders of home secretary Dr Niranjan Mardi.

Collector Sandeep Nanduri and superintendent of police Murali Ramba had recommended to the home secretary to detain Kaleel Rahuman, 47, of Melapalayam, his sons Mohamed Irshad, 21, and Mohamed Yunus, 22, Kottaiyan, 36, of Usilampatti in Madurai, Saravanan, 29, and Velmurugan, 26, of Kovilpatti in Tuticorin, under the NSA. They are lodged at the Palayamkottai central prison.

The police had arrested several people in connection with incidents of violence including burning of vehicles on the Tuticorin collectorate campus, stone-pelting and damaging of public property. Thirteen people had died in the police firing during the anti-Sterlite protests in Tuticorin on May 22. Sandeep Nanduri told reporters on Monday many people had been attending the Monday grievance day meet which was an indication of normalcy being restored in the district.

The collector said 13 tahsildars had been entrusted with the work of helping families of the 13 shooting victims without any delay. A list had been prepared and sent to the government for providing a government job each for the next of kin of the thirteen victims.

He also said steps were being taken to help those who were injured. He added the police were not harassing anybody and only

those who indulged in violence had been arrested and among them six had been detained under the National Security Act. He said areas around the Sterlite plant would be developed with basic amenities and money from the interest on the fine amount of 100 crore given by Sterlite would be utilised for the same.

'State-sponsored atrocity'

STAFF REPORTER

COIMBATORE, JUNE 13, 2018 00:00 IST

The death of 13 persons in the violence that erupted in Thoothukudi on May 22 and 23 was nothing short of state-sponsored atrocity, national secretary of the Communist Party of India D. Raja said here on Tuesday.

He accused the State government of failing to protect the people.

The government and the police had treated the Thoothukudi people as subjects and not citizens. The talk of anti-social elements infiltrating the protest was absurd and insensitive considering the death of 13 persons.

The Tamil Nadu Police had failed in crowd management and resorted to firing on protesters without first using water canons or tear gas shells, he alleged and said that to accuse people for the violence was unacceptable.

Mr. Raja also criticised the State government's delayed action against Sterlite industries.

Pollution control board withdraws consent for Sterlite's second unit

Decision comes in the wake of 100-day protests and the police firing that killed 13 people

SV KRISHNA CHAITANYA
@Chennai

IS it the end of the road for Vedanta Sterlite's expansion plans in Thoothukudi?

The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) has withdrawn the Consent to Establish (CTE) granted to the second copper smelter unit for which work was going on in full swing until the 'infamous' police firing on May 22 which killed 13 civilians.

Confirming the development, district environment engineer PS Livingston told *Express* that

CTE was withdrawn on June 7 and the same was communicated to the Sterlite.

The official said the decision was taken based on a series of developments that took place post-May 22. The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court granted an interim stay on the environment clearance granted to the second unit in 2009 and renewed in 2015 and 2016.

The court told Sterlite to send a new application seeking environmental clearance to the Centre. It observed that the company would need fresh clearance for phase 2 of its expansion and

could not use the clearance that was granted for phase 1.

"Citing interim stay, we have withdrawn the CTE," the official said. The High Court Bench, comprising Justices M Sundar and Anita Sumant, had passed the order on the public interest litigation filed by environmentalist Fathima Babu.

The bench also directed the

Centre to hold a public hearing within four months before granting environment clearance to Sterlite.

Apart from the interim stay, the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited (SIPCOT) cancelled land allotment to the tune of 342.22 acres for the proposed second unit.

Madurai Bench's orders

The court told Sterlite to send a new application seeking environmental clearance to the Centre. It observed that the company would need fresh clearance for phase 2 of its expansion and could not use the clearance that was granted for phase 1



■ Sterlite copper closure shadow begins to lengthen Thoothukudi port's new head has hard days ahead

M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 12

The newly-appointed chairman for Thoothukudi VOC port has a challenging task ahead as the ongoing protests in the region against industries is expected to have a negative impact on export-import (exim) trade through the port in days to come.

Thoothukudi VOC port trust has Rinkesh Roy as the second consecutive IRTS officer as its chairman-in-charge, after I Jayakumar was reverted to the Railway Board on completion of his tenure in the Ministry of Shipping as chairman-in-charge of Thoothukudi VOC port since last September.

Rinkesh Roy, a 1992 batch officer in the Indian Railway Traffic Services (IRTS), who is also the chairman of Paradip port, said on assuming additional charge as chairman-in-charge of V O C port that the port would continue to improve its operational efficiency by reducing transit time and augmenting infrastructure and facilities to attract new customers.

The office at VOC port in Thoothukudi is said to be a challenging task as the port has to compensate the loss of its business volume due to the closure of one of its major client, Sterlite copper, that imported 1.3 mil-

TNCC chief against using NSA on anti-Sterlite activists

R.VALAYAPATHY | DC
VEDARANYAM, JUNE 12:

Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) president S.Thirunavukkarasar strongly condemned the Tamil Nadu government for detaining six persons under the National Security Act (NSA) in connection with the recent riots over the Sterlite copper unit issue at Thoothukudi.

He told newsmen at Vedaranyam on Tuesday that instead of finding a solution for the peoples' stir, the Government "is letting loose its dictatorial attitude which is also highly con-



demnable."

Referring to the agitation against the new eight-way expressway between Chennai and Salem, the senior Congress leader urged the government to stop arresting farmers opposing the project, as their livelihood will be affected. The Government should settle the issue through

negotiations or find an alternative way, Thirunavukkarasar urged.

Even the agitation by Jacto-Geo members (state government employees) should be settled through talks, he urged. He also prayed for former Prime Minister A B Vajpayee's speedy recovery.

Later, addressing party workers, Mr. Thirunavukkarasar hinted there may be a change in TNCC leadership, saying political culture demanded, for party building activities, to cooperate with whoever is made TNCC president by the Congress high command.

lion tonnes of copper concentrate and 1.2 million tonnes of rock phosphate in an year and an additional export volume of around two million tonnes of refined copper, copper alloys and sulphuric acid that is said to have constituted around 15 per cent of the total business volume of the port. The port has already faced a severe blow due to the loss of

export of garnet, titanium ores and concentrates due to the closure of the entire Beach mineral mining and export business since 2013.

A highly placed official source from the port was disappointed over the appointment of an IRTS officer, sidelining port officers to the top position. He felt that the appointment of an experienced port officers or a senior

IAS officer as a regular chairman of the port during hard times would be helpful to the port in Thoothukudi. It was also pointed that after S Ananda Chandra Bose, a senior port officer elevated to be the chairperson of Thoothukudi VOC port in 2013, no senior and efficient officer in the port sector has been given that opportunity, which is a pity.

TAMIL NADU

HC rejects plea to book Rajini

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, JUNE 14, 2018 00:00 IST

The Madras High Court on Wednesday refused to issue a direction to the Krishnagiri police to register a First Information Report against actor Rajinikanth for having claimed that violence by anti-social elements was what drove the police to open fire against the protesters in Thoothukudi last month, leading to the death of 13 people.

Justice P.N. Prakash followed the usual orders passed by him in such petitions and held that the petitioner must have exhausted all other sources of remedies, such as approaching the higher officials in the police department and filing a private complaint before the jurisdictional judicial magistrate concerned, before moving a direction petition in the High Court.

The present petition was filed by D. Silambarasan of Hosur in Krishnagiri district, who claimed that the actor had belittled the anti-Sterlite protests by claiming that the anti-social elements were responsible for the deaths.

'TAKE POLICY DECISION ON STERLITE SMELTER'

Bench directs the State government to submit its stand by June 22, as petitions claimed the G.O won't stand scrutiny

Notice on plea for med college in Ramnad

Madurai: The Madurai Bench ordered notice to the State on a plea to establish a government medical college in Ramnathapuram district. Admitting a PIL filed by an advocate G Thirumurugan, a division bench comprising Justices C T Selvam and A M Basheer Ahamed ordered notice to the Principal Secretary of Health and Family Welfare department, the Joint Director of Medicine and Rural Health Services and the District Collector of Ramanathapuram returnable in two weeks. In his petition, the advocate pointing out the norms stated by the Medical Council of India, said every district should have a medical college within a distance of 110 km. The nearest medical college for Ramanathapuram is located roughly around 120 km away from the district. He also submitted that there are no constraints regarding land

VINODH ARULAPPAN @Madurai

COMING down heavily on the Tamil Nadu government, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court advised the current dispensation to take a policy decision, if it was really bent on shutting down Sterlite copper smelter permanently, rather than passing a Government Order (GO)

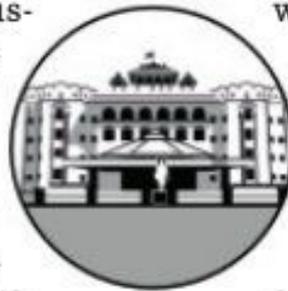
Hearing a batch of petitions, including the one filed by MDMK General Secretary Vaidyanathan, seeking permanent closure of Sterlite industries, a Bench comprising Justices C T Selvam and A M Basheer Ahamed heard the submissions made by advocates appearing on behalf of the petitioners, claiming that the decision taken by the Tamil Nadu government to close the Sterlite plant was based on the recommendations and report submitted by the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) was not a firm one.

The counsel expressed apprehension that there was a possibility of reversal of the closure order, which could not stand the scrutiny of an appellate Court or the apex court as the Government Order (GO) was not legally strong.

The judges, pointing out a Supreme Court judgment slapping a ₹100 crore fine on Sterlite, said that it was evident from the apex court verdict that there was a possibility of environmental damage by Sterlite, so, the fine imposed would be spent on measures to mitigate the environmental damage, including those done to water and soil, in the vicinity of the plant.

"Even after 20 years, the situation remains unchanged (regarding Sterlite) and now the world and governments are moving forward in dealing with the environmental challenges. Article 48A of the Constitution should be taken into account," the judges said.

Rejecting the contention of Additional Advocate General Chellapandian that the compensation for the victims May 22 Thoothukudi firing had been enhanced, the judges lashed out saying, "No amount can replace a life". "If the government is serious in closing down Sterlite, citing the environmental hazards, let them take a policy decision instead of passing a GO," the judges told the AAG, and directed him to submit the stand of the government on the suggestions on June 22.



Vaiko happy with HC order in Sterlite case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Thoothukudi

MDMK General Secretary Vaiko expressed happiness on the intervention of the court in the Sterlite issue, with the Madurai Bench advising the State government to come forward with a policy decision to shut down the Vedanta's copper smelter functioning in Thoothukudi, stating that the current Government Order could be easily cancelled.

Addressing press persons in Thoothukudi on Wednesday, Vaiko said that he was happy with the proceedings of the court. It has advocated the State government to come up with a policy decision on the closure of Sterlite Copper. The GO issued by the Tamil Nadu government on May 28, stating to shut down the copper unit, is an eyewash, and it cannot withstand judicial scrutiny, he added. Vaiko appreciated the judges for directing the government to submit reasons and details for the closure 'unambiguously'.

Keeping track of issuing a simple GO to shut down a copper unit, and the State min-

ister for electricity Thangamani's statement on closure of Sterlite hampering copper wire procurement for the department, Vaiko accused State government of standing by the Sterlite Copper unit. When the copper concentrate ore is imported from Australia and African countries, and a large part of the production has been exported, why does not the copper smelter be installed where they get the ore from, he questioned.

"If the copper unit resumed operations, we will never allow to operate it. Already, 13 civilians have been killed and many injured during the anti-Sterlite rally," he added. The May 22 rally was peaceful and the attack started after police opened fire, he claimed.

He also condemned the detention of six protesters attached to Makkal Athikaram under the National Security Act (NSA). Vaiko alleged that the State government was wrongly using police force to quell protests. He said that state action would create bad blood and the repercussions would have to be borne by the State.



HC REJECTS PLEA TO BOOK RAJINI OVER REMARKS ON STERLITE STIR

Chennai: The Madras High Court on Wednesday refused to entertain a petition seeking registration of a police complaint against actor Rajinikanth over his remarks that anti-social elements had infiltrated the recent protest against Sterlite's copper plant in Tuticorin.

Justice P N Prakash dismissed the petition as not maintainable and referred to his own order of September 27, 2016 wherein he had made it clear that the high court cannot be

approached directly for registration of FIR.

Instead, the aggrieved person should first approach the station house officer, then the superintendent of police and the magistrate court, he had said in the judgment.

In view of the order, the judge said the petition of D Silambarasan of Hosur seeking a direction to police to file an FIR against the actor was not maintainable.

However, the judge said the petitioner was at liber-



ty to work out his remedy in the manner as ordered by him earlier.

The petitioner contended that Rajinikanth's remarks after visiting Tuticorin on May 30 amounted to defaming the 'peaceful' protesters.

He said he had approached the inspector of Police, Hosur, with a complaint but it was not accepted.

The petitioner said he had then sent the complaint to the inspector of police and superintendent

of police, Krishnagiri district, by registered post, but there was no response. Rajinikanth had blamed anti-social elements for the violence during the protests against Sterlite that resulted in 13 deaths in police firing on May 22 and 23.

He had said the "problem started" only after police came under attack from such anti-social elements. Various quarters had criticised Rajinikanth for the remarks.

DC with PTI inputs

■ Officials in a bind after wave of anti-Sterlite protests

Fishermen flex muscle for easing boat norms in south

M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 13:

After the anti-Sterlite riots here recently, Thoothukudi fishing community has now raised its voice against the Fisheries department that denied permission for around 160 mechanised boats to operate from fishing harbour on the ground that those boats do not comply with the norms of the Tamil Nadu Marine Regulation Act (TNMRA) 1983.

The suicide attempt of an unregistered mechanized boat owner, Kennedy in front of the office of the assistant director of fisheries in Thoothukudi forced the officials to hold talks with the boat owners on Wednesday.

The problem started a year ago, as the country-craft fishermen numbering around 4,500 in Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli districts objected against the permission to bigger mechanised boats that violated the norms of the TNMRA.

The norms say a mechanized boat should have a maximum length of 15-mts with a maximum



MDMK leader Vaiko coming out of Madurai Bench of Madras High court after appearing in a case against Sterlite on Wednesday. —DC

engine power of 120 HP. Unable to withstand the objection from the country-craft fishermen, the Thoothukudi Fisheries department refused subsidized diesel to around 160 mechanised boats among the 250 mechanised boats in Thoothukudi.

Protesting this action, all the 250 mechanised boats in Thoothukudi fishing harbor went on an indefinite strike since September 20 last year. Moreover, the mechanised boat fishermen too ap-

proached the Madras High court bench at Madurai seeking a direction to the Fisheries department to register and permit the 160 mechanised boats. The court ruling, however, went against the fishermen and the situation further became worse further.

The Fisheries department too clearly expressed its inability to accept the demand of the mechanised boat fishermen, as boats exceeding the length of 15-mts stipulated

under the TNMRA could be registered only with the Marine Mercantile department directly under the Director General (DG) of Shipping.

“Unless the law is amended we cannot register the 160 boats that are longer and have more powerful engines beyond the 120 HP stipulated under the TNMRA,” said Amala Xavier, joint director of Fisheries, Thoothukudi.

However, as the ban period on the east coast comes to an end on June 15, the mechanized fishing boats in Thoothukudi that have been on an indefinite strike for around 9 months since September, 2017 started pressurizing the Fisheries department officials and the district collector on this issue.

The Fisheries department officials along with the Thoothukudi Sub-collector, Prasanth and tahsildar, Sivagamasundari, however, are in talks with the mechanised boat fishermen represented by the president of the Thoothukudi Mechanised Boat Owners Association, Anthonyappa.

Advance bail plea of advocates adjourned

STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, JUNE 15, 2018 00:00 IST

The anticipatory bail plea of two advocates, S. Vanchinathan and K. Hariragavan, who participated in the anti-Sterlite agitation in Thoothukudi, has been adjourned by Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Thursday.

Justice G.R. Swaminathan adjourned the case to June 18 for further hearing. The court said that the earlier direction to the authorities not to initiate any action against the petitioners would continue till further orders.

The advocates said that they had been booked under Sections 147 (punishment for rioting), 148 (rioting, armed with deadly weapon), 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) and 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code and Section 3 of the Tamil Nadu Public Property (Prevention of Damage and Loss) Act, 1992.

The advocates claimed that they had peacefully protested seeking closure of the plant and were not involved in any kind of violence during the protest. They said that they also rendered legal service to those who were in need. However, the police abused their power and registered several cases against them. They said that the allegations charged against them were not true.

'False cases are being foisted'

Makkal Athikaram, a leftist organisation, on Thursday filed a public interest litigation petition before Madurai Bench of Madras High Court, seeking restraint against the Thoothukudi police from continuing the arrests of anti-Sterlite protesters and investigation in the case.

The petitioner, K. Kaliappan of Thanjavur, its State treasurer, said the unwarranted shooting by the police against the unarmed protesters had left at least 13 dead and many were injured. None of the organisations participating in the protests had resorted to violence and the agitation was largely peaceful, before the police opened fire, he said.

The police were continuing the crackdown against the protesters.

False cases had been foisted against the innocent, people were being taken into illegal custody and there was a continued surveillance in Thoothukudi district, he said.

Makkal Athikaram members, who actively participated in the protests, were targeted and remanded even though they never indulged in any violence.

There was no prima facie case made out from the FIR registered against the members. The case should be investigated by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) led by a competitive officer not below the rank of DIG, the petitioner said.

Senior Counsel M. Ajmal Khan, representing the petitioner, said that as many as 243 cases were registered against the public and they were being remanded indiscriminately. Even though the case was transferred to CB-CID, the Thoothukudi police were still continuing with the illegal detentions. He said that the police should stop the detentions immediately.

Taking up the plea for hearing, a Division Bench of Justices C.T. Selvam and A.M. Basheer Ahamed adjourned the case to June 18.

AB plea of anti-Sterlite protesters adjourned

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Madurai

THE Madurai Bench of Madras High Court has adjourned the hearing of a batch of anticipatory bail petitions of the anti Sterlite protesters and directed the police to produce evidence of their alleged involvement in inducing the riot.

Hearing a batch of advance bail pleas, including of advocates S Vanchinathan and K Hariraghavan, Justice G R Swaminathan directed the prosecution, which vehemently opposed the anticipatory plea, to submit any video or photographic evidence against the petitioners, in inducing the riot that happened during the anti Sterlite protest on May 22 and May 23 and adjourned the case to June 18.

Justice Swaminathan observed that the petitioners cannot be arrested unless the police have had proper evidence to prove that they were involved in violence and "mere physical presence at the protest spot cannot be cited as a reason to arrest the petitioners."

Earlier, the petitioners approached the Court, apprehending the arrest, contending that they did not indulge in any kind of violence during the protests and stated that they were present at the spot only to provide legal assistance to the May 22 protesters.

Soma Giri Karuppasamy temple

The Madurai Bench of Madras High Court disposed of a Public Interest Litigation (PIL), seeking the taking over of the administration of Soma Giri Karuppasamy temple in Melavalavu village by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments department (HR and CE), by directing the department to consider the petitioner's plea.

The litigant K Saravana Kumar, a resident of Melavalavu village in Melur Taluk, submitted that the scheduled caste people of the village are being prevented from participating in the upcoming temple festival which is being organised by caste Hindus. Citing that the village has been prone to communal violence for many decades, the petitioner apprehended that the festival, if conducted by caste Hindus, may lead to more violence and also affect the rights of the scheduled caste people. Further the petitioner made a representation to the HR and CE take over the control of the temple and also the responsibility of conducting the festival. As there was no response, the petitioner approached the Court for a direction. Disposing of the plea, a bench comprising Justices C T Selvam and A M Basheer Ahamed, directed the HR and CE department to consider the plea of the petitioner in order to avoid any communal problems in the festival.



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THE TIMES OF INDIA

HC bench adjourns hearing on bail plea of 2 advocates

TNN | Jun 15, 2018, 01:11 AM IST



MADURAI: The Madurai bench of the Madras high court on Thursday adjourned hearing on the anticipatory bail petition of two advocates who were booked by the police for allegedly engineering the protests in Tuticorin. When the bail petition came up for hearing last week, justice GR Swaminathan had restrained the police from arresting the two advocates.

Meanwhile, on Thursday, when the bail plea came up for hearing, the judge adjourned it to Monday (June 18). Police have been directed to restrain from arresting the two lawyers until then. S Vanchinathan of Madurai and Hari Raghavan of Tuticorin - both advocates are among those booked by the police in connection with the protests against Sterlite plant

in Tuticorin. While Vanchinathan practices before the Madurai bench of the Madras high court, Raghavan is an advocate at the district court in Tuticorin.

Tuticorin police had booked cases under various Sections of the IPC including 506 (2) (Criminal intimidation), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharging duty) and Section 3 of the Tamil Nadu Property (prevention of damages and loss) Act.

According to their bail petition, they were in the riot-hit coastal town only to provide legal assistance and advise to the anti-Sterlite people's federation. Further, they said that they were in no way connected to the violent actions as mentioned in the FIR and submitted that police acted to stifle their voices.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Makkal Adhigaram moves HC to halt arrests in Tuticorin

TNN | Jun 15, 2018, 01:12 AM IST



MADURAI: Two days after six functionaries of Makkal Adhigaram were detained by the Tuticorin police under the National Security Act (NSA), the outfit has moved the Madurai bench of the Madras high court, requesting the court to pass an interim injunction restraining the police from further arrests. The six were detained for allegedly instigating and engineering the violent protests in the coastal town on May 22 and 23.

The petition was filed by treasurer of the outfit, K Kaliyappan, 67, of Thanjavur, who also sought a court direction to constitute a special investigation team (SIT) led by a police officer not below the rank of a deputy inspector general to investigate the cases relating to the events that unfolded at Tuticorin.

Kaliyappan, in his petition stated that he retired as a general manager of a bank and that his outfit is only a people participation organisation to educate and empower the people on issues. The petition stated that apart from filing several false cases against the protesters, police have also taken several people into illegal custody. "With an intention to create panic among our members and public in Tuticorin, police have resorted to illegal surveillance at the residences of people and members of my organisation," the petition stated. It further added that this illegal surveillance is being carried out in various districts of southern Tamil Nadu.

The petition also questioned as to why members of their outfit were targeted when several thousands of people had participated in the protest. This surveillance, the petitioner said has created panic in the minds of their family members including children. Stating that the members of the outfit are ready to appear before the court of law or before the commission appointed by the state for lawful inquiry, the petition sought the court to pass an interim direction to direct the Tuticorin SP to produce the video clippings of the events before the court.

TAMIL NADU

NGO slams action against anti-Sterlite protesters

STAFF REPORTER

JUNE 16, 2018 00:00 IST

Questions how people could be booked under the National Security Act in connection with the anti-Sterlite agitation

“The people of Thoothukudi are being suppressed and illegally detained by the police so that the truth doesn’t come out. How could people be booked under the National Security Act? Was the protest a threat to the nation?” asked Henri Tiphagne, Executive Director of the NGO People’s Watch, here on Friday.

Addressing a press conference, he condemned the “illegal detentions” in Thoothukudi in the wake of the anti-Sterlite agitation and the alleged crackdown by the police on innocent people, which he said was still continuing.

Mr. Tiphagne alleged that people were being illegally detained so that they wouldn’t testify against the police.

“Many FIRs were registered against political leaders. Why have they not been arrested? Where is the equality before law?” he asked. He noted that the Supreme Court, in the Arnesh Kumar case, had held that authorising detention without recording the reasons for the same would attract departmental action.

He said that so far, the original Section 144 CrPC order (prohibitory order) imposed in Thoothukudi had not been made public. The inquiry commission headed by Aruna Jagadeesan should make it public, he said, adding that he was yet to receive a reply on an RTI application he had filed on the matter.

He said that following the imposition of Section 144, preventive arrests could have been made, but weren’t made.

The imposition of Section 144 was more to do with private security, he said, in an apparent reference to the Vedanta Group, which owns Sterlite Copper.

Taking a swipe at the political leaders who visited the victims of the violence in Thoothukudi, he said all they did was fly in, visit the hospital, speak to a few patients and fly out. “They have not addressed the real issue,” he said.

Ruckus over Stalin's remarks on Sterlite

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

POINTING out the observation by the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on the action taken to close down Sterlite Copper in Thoothukudi following the police firing that claimed 13 lives, Leader of Opposition MK Stalin on Thursday demanded the government to take necessary steps, including a cabinet resolution to close the polluting unit permanently.

The issue raised a little heat in the House during zero hour as Speaker P Dhanapal expunged a particular term Stalin used, leading to an argument with the Chair who stated that a matter that was sub judice could not be discussed in the House as per rules.

Stalin said he was just reiterating the demand for a Cabinet resolution to permanently shut down the polluting firm.

Criticising the Speaker for expunging the remarks of Stalin, Deputy Leader of Opposition Durai Murugan felt it would be proper if the government stated whether it was taking steps for permanent closure or not. But, it was not fair to remove the remarks from the records. Later, DMK members, though looked agitated, settled down.

KOVAI TO GET AC BUSES?

Chennai: Transport minister MR Vijayabaskar told the Assembly on Thursday that the State government would consider operating air-conditioned town buses in Coimbatore as and when the facility, now available only in Chennai city, is extended to other places. Transport Minister Vijayabaskar said this while responding to a question from AIADMK MLA PRG Arunkumar, who is representing Coimbatore North Assembly constituency. **ENS**

DMK RAISES NEET ISSUE AGAIN

Chennai: The DMK once again raised NEET and organ transplantation issues in the Assembly on Thursday. The party MLAs challenged Health minister Vijaya Baskar to submit a report as to how many from backward communities who studied in government schools got MBBS seat last year when compared to those who studied in private schools. The MLAs also raised organ transplantation issue to which the minister reiterated that he was ready to submit a White Paper in the House. **ENS**

VILLUPURAM RAIL BRIDGE

Chennai: Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami while responding to the concerns aired by DMK MLA K Ponmudi in the Assembly on Thursday, said that a part of the construction work on the Villupuram rail bridge towards Chennai had been completed and another part towards Villupuram town would be completed soon after realigning the underground sewage system. **ENS**

UNDERGROUND CABLE LAYING

Chennai: Electricity Minister P Thangamani assured DMK working president and Leader of Opposition MK Stalin in the Assembly on Thursday that the works for converting overhead electrical lines into underground cables in Kolathur Assembly constituency would be expedited after formulating the specifications for the trenchless method of laying cables. **ENS**

NUTRITION FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

Chennai: Nutrition kits scheme for pregnant women will be implemented through the Tamil Nadu Medical Services Corporation soon, Health minister C Vijaya Baskar said on Thursday. The scheme will help fight anaemia in pregnant women which is still a challenge to the health department, said the minister during the discussion on the demands for grants for his department. **ENS**



‘Midnight arrests’ shock people

M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 15

As many as 234 men have been arrested so far in connection with the May 22 and 23 anti-Sterlite riots in Thoothukudi. Midnight arrests too are being complained about by the people, who on Friday came to the streets demanding to stop such arrests.

According to police sources, 243 cases have been registered in connection with the May 22 riots and the aftermath of the violence. Having collected all the CCTV footages along the path of the violent procession on May 22 and the video clippings and photo-

● 243 cases have been registered in connection with the May 22 riots

graphs, the police identified persons involved in stone pelting, petrol bombs hurling and violence and were picking them up.

Around 234 such identified persons have been said to have been arrested and remanded till June 14. On a single day on June 14 Thoothukudi district police arrested 30 men, shocking locals.

Among the total number of arrested persons, 173 were released on bail according to the police, who too were severely criticised

for picking up youths by knocking at their doors at midnight.

According to Ponmari, a 24-year-old housewife of Madathur village, a few policemen entered her house in the night a couple of days ago and asked for her husband, who went out-station.

“The policemen went to all the rooms with shoes and they even opened the bureau and searched for my husband,” said Ponmari, adding, her two children who were frightened by the entry of the police into their house were yet to recover from the fear.

To avoid midnight arrests the Madathur people were

reportedly staying outside their house at the village temple ground during nights for the last two days. Demanding to stop the midnight arrests, around 100 women of the Madathur village staged a road blockade in the Thoothukudi main road. Thoothukudi DMK MLA, P Geetha Jeevan petitioning the district collector in this regard, warned that the illegal arrests by the police if not stopped immediately might result in another people’s agitation. The police officials and the district collector however denied the people’s complaint and added that no arbitrary arrest was made.

Yechury alleges Centre's role in Thoothukudi firing

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, JUNE 15

The CPI(M) general secretary Mr. Sitaram Yechury has suspected the Union government's role in the recent police firing at Thoothukudi regarding the Sterlite copper closure issue, in which 13 agitators were gunned down and demanded a probe by a sitting Supreme court Judge to bring out the entire truth behind the incident.

Addressing a CPI(M) organised public meeting at Tiruchy on Thursday night, Mr. Yechury recalled his interactions with the injured in the Thoothukudi firing, and said he came to understand that there was neither any warning nor any sound of gunshot. "The police used guns fitted with silencers," Mr. Yechury alleged. He said sanction for such kind of firing against the civilians could be granted only by the Union government.

He wondered how the Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi did not have time to express his grief or condolence on the Thoothukudi police firing.

Referring to the proposed eight-lane Chennai-Salem green corridor project, Mr. Yechury made another startling allegation saying this anti-people project "is at the behest of Jindal group" that has interests in mining. He urged that the people should fight against these type of projects.



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Sitaram Yechury

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

False cases aimed at silencing oppressed voices of Tuticorin

tnn | Jun 16, 2018, 12.58 AM IST

Madurai: The arrests, illegal detentions, and tortures by the police and detentions under the National Security Act (NSA) going in full swing in Tuticorin are aimed at threatening and silencing the voices of the people of Tuticorin, said Henri Tiphagne of People's Watch, an NGO that has been following the post-riot and police firing that claimed 13 lives in that coastal district on May 22.

“The police waited for the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) and one member commission appointed by the government to probe the riots and police firing to leave the district. Once they left the police has started mass illegal detentions, registering of cases and torturing them. More than 200 cases have been registered against thousands of persons,” he claimed.

According to Henri, more than 800 persons were illegally detained and most of them were released after a couple of days of torture. “The armed reserve in Millerpuram is one of the mass illegal detention centres,” he said. He also questioned why not even cases were registered by the police against the men in khaki who killed the protesters and the public and also brutally assaulted them during the Tuticorin violence.

Quoting senior police officers saying that they have been arresting the rioters based on the CCTV footages and pictures they have obtained, he came down heavily on the police for circulating such videos and trying to silence the videos of police atrocities against the common man.

Stating that M K Stalin, Vaiko, and Seeman are among over a dozen political leaders who have been booked under sections 143, 188 and 153(A) of the Indian Penal Code, he questioned the police for not arresting them but for detaining the common man of Tuticorin who have been booked under the same sections.

About the people's inquest they conducted in Tuticorin, he said that they would release a 1,000 page report on the turn of incidents that will also have the first account of 250 people who were affected by the riots. "It will be released in a week along with videos collected on the turn of events that will be self-explanatory," he said and recalled difficulty in collecting details from the people, who feared torture by the police.

The report will also be handed over to the NHRC with a hope that the victims will get justice, he added.

TAMIL NADU

No harassment, detentions only based on evidence, says SP



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 17, 2018 00:00 IST

'243 cases filed in connection with anti-Sterlite violence'

Amid allegations that the police were conducting midnight search operations to arrest those suspected of involvement in rioting and arson during the anti-Sterlite protest on May 22 last, Superintendent of Police Murali Ramba clarified that the law enforcement officials were only arresting those against whom they had obtained clinching evidence.

Speaking to mediapersons here on Saturday, Mr. Ramba said the police had registered 243 cases after Rs. 15.67 crore-worth properties, including 331 government-owned properties, were destroyed during the anti-Sterlite protest that turned violent on May 22. Subsequently, based on the evidence gathered

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during inquiries, they arrested 248 persons.

‘Normalcy restored’

“The police are detaining only those who were involved in rioting and arson, and have never harassed women and children. Thoothukudi district has returned to normalcy with the cooperation of the public, for which I thank the citizens of Thoothukudi,” he said.

He made it clear that those who were spreading rumours and engaging in malicious campaigns against the police on social media would be taken to task.

Building peace

The SP said the district police, by engaging with residents’ welfare associations and other organisations, were making sustained efforts to ensure lasting peace in the coastal town. The police were meeting the residents of Lions Town, Terespuram, Madathur, Pandaarampatti, Sahayapuram and other localities regularly to allay their fears. “If the public still have any fears, they can call me on 99524-23555,” Mr. Ramba said.

Earlier in the day, the Communist Party of India (CPI) submitted a petition to the SP, demanding a stop to the “midnight arrests” of persons alleged to have been involved in rioting and arson during the anti-Sterlite protest, which culminated in the death of 13 persons.

‘Causing panic’

In the petition, party district secretary Azhagumuthu Pandian said 13 persons lost their lives in the police firing as the anti-Sterlite protest turned violent.

The police, by conducting midnight searches on residences to arrest the accused in the cases that were registered after the violence, had triggered panic among women, the petition said.

“Since such search operations will ruin the normalcy that has returned to Thoothukudi and sow a sense of fear in the minds of women and children, they should be stopped. Besides withdrawing the cases registered in connection with the violence, the police should release the persons they have detained,” said Mr. Azhagumuthu, who was accompanied by veteran CPI leader R. Nallakannu.

The police are detaining only those who were involved in rioting and arson, and have never harassed women and children

‘₹15 cr worth properties damaged in anti-Sterlite stir’

Police neither tortured nor detained anyone illegally, says SP Murali Rambha

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Thoothukudi

POLICE had arrested over 248 persons in connection to the violence erupted after police firing at Anti-Sterlite protesters on May 22. During the violence, over ₹15.67 crore worth public and private properties had been damaged, said Thoothukudi SP Murali Rambha while addressing press persons here on Saturday.

Weeks after the gruesome incident, SP Murali Rambha met press persons and briefed the incident on Saturday.

Rambha said that the police had registered as many as 243 cases in connection to rioting at SIPCOT, Thoothukudi south, Thoothukudi central and Thoothukudi North police stations, and had arrested 248 persons. As many as 331 properties belong to government and private, worth to ₹15.67 crore had been damaged, he added.

At the backdrop of serious of complaints on illegal detention of protesters during late hours, Rambha maintained that police did not arrest any women or children. They have detained only those evidently involved in the violence. Police neither tortured nor detained anyone illegally, he said.

As normalcy had returned to the coastal town, the SP warned of those spreading rumours through social media. Public can contact him personally over phone (9952423555) for any

complaints round the clock, he said.

Among 243 cases, five cases that involve complaints given by the deputy tahsildars who gave shooting orders, are already shifted to CB-CID for a detailed probe. CB-CID SP Praveen Kumar Abinav and ADSP Mariraj have been investigating the cases. Five DSPs, including Anil Kumar, Kabimullah, Ramesh Babu, Vijayaraghavan and Saravanan have taken up one case each and a total of eight inspectors and eight sub inspector are assisting them.

No kids, women held

At the backdrop of serious of complaints on illegal detention of protesters during late hours, Rambha maintained that police did not arrest any women or children.

According to sources privy to the CB-CID probing, State police have triggered 131 bullets at the crowd at different places including at collectorate campus, NH opposite to collectorate campus, and FCI roundabout, Third Mile, P&T colony, in front of Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital and south station on Palayamkottai road and at Anna Nagar, and Threspuram, they said.

At least 40,000 residents of Thoothukudi town and the nearby areas took a rally to besiege the collectorate campus on the 100th day of the anti-Sterlite protest, demanding to shutter the Sterlite Copper unit, the leading copper producer in the country, functioning in Thoothukudi SIPCOT complex on May 22. Despite Section 144 of CrPC was issued, there was an overwhelming support for the protest, overriding intelligence reports.

HC allows CPM's public meeting on June 18

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Thoothukudi

THE Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court has allowed the Thoothukudi unit of CPM to organise a public meeting on June 18 to condemn the brutal killing of 13 people during the police firing on May 22.

Condemning the police firing at the anti-Sterlite protesters, district unit of CPM planned to organise a rally and a public meeting on June 18. However, the district police denied permission. The party cadre moved the Madurai Bench, and when the case came up for hearing on Saturday, the judge granted permission to organise the public meeting, while denying nod for the proposed condemnation rally.

The Thoothukudi police, which is in a fix over the firing incident, have been denying permissions for public protests citing law and order situation. District secretary of the CPM, Arjunan, told reporters that public meeting will be organised at Chidhambaranagar bus stop. Senior CPM leader Brinda Karat will participate in the public meeting, he added.

'STOP MIDNIGHT SEARCHES'

Senior CPI leader Nallakannu submitted a petition to Superintendent of Police Murali Ramba, urging him to stop illegal searches for protesters at their houses, on Saturday. The petition said that midnight house search was unfair. Moreover, taking protesters to the stations forcibly during late hours was causing panic among public, affecting their family. At a time normalcy is returning to the coastal town, police should stop raiding homes, the petition said.



INDIA, CHHATTISGARH, POLYMER | PUBLIC, DISTANCE FROM LADDER, AT A | HIGH DASH PUBLIC WERE TRYING TO | COUNTRY | REQUIRED BY THE

'Properties worth ₹15 crore damaged during anti-Sterlite protests'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Thoothukudi

Rambha said that the police had registered 243 cases in connection with the violence at SIPCOT, Thoothukudi South, Thoothukudi Central and Thoothukudi North police stations. In the backdrop of complaints against illegal detention of protesters during late hours, Rambha maintained that police did not arrest any women or children. They detained only those involved in the violence. Police

neither tortured nor detained anyone illegally, he said. As normalcy had returned to the coastal town, the superintendent of police warned those spreading rumours through social media, and said that public can contact him round-the-clock personally over phone (9962423555) for any complaints, he said. Among 243 cases, five comprised complaints from deputy

tahsildars, who gave shooting orders. He said the five complaints had been transferred to CB-CID, which had assigned SP Praveen Kumar Abinav and ADSP Mariraj to the probe. Five DSPs, including Anil Kumar, Kabimullah, Ramesh Babu, Vijayaraghavan and Saravanan, have taken up one case each and a total of eight inspectors and eight sub-inspector are assisting them, he informed.

According to sources privy to the CB-CID probe, the State police fired 131 rounds at the crowd at different places including on collectorate campus, NH opposite to collectorate campus, FCI roundabout, Third Mile, P&T colony in front of Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital, south station on Palayamkottai Road, Anna Nagar and Threspuram, they said. Meanwhile, the Madurai

Bench of the Madras High Court has allowed the Thoothukudi unit of CPM to organise a public meeting on June 18 to condemn the brutal killing of 13 people during the police firing on May 22. Condemning the police firing at the anti-Sterlite protesters, district unit of CPM planned to organise a rally and a public meeting on June 18. However, the district police denied permis-

sion. The party cadre moved the Madurai Bench, and when the case came up for hearing on Saturday, the judge granted permission to organise the public meeting, while denying nod for the proposed condemnation rally. The Thoothukudi police, which is in a fix over the firing incident, were denying permissions for protests citing law and order situation. CPM district secretary Arjunan, told reporters.



TAMIL NADU

Sulphuric acid leak detected at Sterlite



JUNE 18, 2018 00:00 IST

“We are already assisting the local administration to handle the situation and have offered all support to keep a vigil on the plant and its surroundings. In fact, anticipating such incidents in the absence of regular maintenance, we have been requesting the State government to give us limited manpower access and minimal power supply so that mandatory safety audits at the smelter can be regularly carried out. That request is still pending... We have had no access to the plant ever since it was suddenly sealed and locked with effect from May 28, 2018,” the statement said. The quantity of sulphuric acid present in the plant was not known.

Under inquiry: CM

Meanwhile, when Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, who attended a meeting of the NITI Aayog in New Delhi, was asked by journalists if the Prime Minister had spoken to him about the Sterlite controversy, he merely said the issue was under inquiry.

The government had taken all steps to ensure the closure of the Sterlite plant. He pointed out that the government had suspended electricity supply to the plant, and it was sealed.

Minor leakage in acid tank at Sterlite plant

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Thoothukudi

A MINOR leakage was found in in the sulfuric acid storage tank in Sterlite plant in Thoothukudi.

Collector Sandeep Nanduri said that the incident came to light when a team led by Thoothukudi Sub Collector Prasanth went for inspecting at the storage units of the plant on Sunday, as the district administration received an information regarding the chemical leak.

“The team that includes officials from Pollution Control Board, fire and rescue and police departments will go inside the plant on Monday again to

remove the acid from the storage tank. The entire process will be completed in a day,” he said, allaying the fear of the public.

Asked whether the seal of the plant that was permanently closed following a government order was removed during the inspection, the collector said that the technical team had gone inside the plant via a small gate.

Sandeep Nanduri said that after studying the report of the technical team, further corrective measures would be taken. “There are many chemical storage units in the plant that is now 100 per cent shut,” he added.

**THE NEW
INDIAN
EXPRESS**

Mon, 18 June 2018

epaper.newindianexpress.com/c/29611983



Sulphuric acid leak at Sterlite godown detected

Thoothukudi, June 17: A minor sulphuric acid leak was detected at a godown of Sterlite copper plant here, closed by government last month following violent protests in which 13 people were killed in police firing, but a senior official said there was no need to panic and it would be plugged. "There is no need to panic about the sulphuric acid leak as it is very minor and will be plugged," district collector Sandeep Nanduri said. —PTI

CBI probe into police firing would have been ideal, says CJ

Mohamed Imranullah S.

CHENNAI, JUNE 19, 2018 00:00 IST

Expresses doubt over efficacy of an inquiry by forensic experts

Madras High Court Chief Justice Indira Banerjee on Monday told the counsel for a public interest litigation petitioner that the latter should have sought a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the May 22 and 23 police firing incidents at Thoothukudi, in which 13 people were killed, instead of seeking a direction to the State government to constitute a team of forensic experts to enquire into the issue.

Presiding over the first Division Bench along with Justice P.T. Asha, the Chief Justice wondered what purpose would be served by constituting a team of forensic experts. Later, she adjourned the hearing on the petition to July 6 after directing Special Government Pleader E. Manohar to ensure that a counter-affidavit was filed by then on behalf of the State government. The petitioner was also given liberty to file a rejoinder before the next hearing.

During the course of the hearing on Monday, the Special Government Pleader told the Division Bench that the government had already constituted a commission of inquiry led by Justice Aruna Jagadeesan, a former judge of the High Court, and therefore, there was no necessity to constitute a team as prayed for by the litigant, S. Rajanikanth. The petitioner's counsel argued that the commission would not help in unravelling the truth.

Apart from a team of forensic experts, the petitioner had sought payment of compensation of Rs. 1 crore to the families of the victims, suspension of the police officers involved in the firing, registration of a case of murder against them and a direction to the government to reveal all official orders that were passed to quell the protests.

TAMIL NADU

Govt. panel won't bring out truth: Medha Patkar



STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 19, 2018 00:00 IST

Her team of lawyers to assist people in Thoothukudi

Social activist Medha Patkar on Monday said that truth would not come out if the one-man commission appointed by the State government probes the May 22 anti-Sterlite protests that claimed 13 lives in police firing.

“How will a State government appointee impartially conduct a probe,” asked Ms. Patkar, who visited families of those who were killed in the violence.

“Most of the government inquiry reports that are submitted to the Assembly

gather dust,” she said.

Ms. Patkar hoped that the National Human Rights Commission would investigate the violence properly.

“It was an agitation that was led by the local people which was absolutely peaceful. What has happened here is absolutely unconstitutional and unacceptable,” she said.

Ms. Patkar said that there was no instigation for police firing. “Even people who were simply clicking pictures were fired at,” she alleged.

Recalling her visit here in 1998 to participate in the anti-Sterlite protests, she said the government in power then was more receptive. “[The then Chief Minister] Jayalalithaa, although she didn’t meet the protesters... there was some space for protests.” But under the current government she said that there’s no space for dissent.

She strongly criticised the late-night arrests following the violence. “The arrests are completely against the law,” she said.

She said that her team of lawyers and activists would assist the victims in filing formal complaints against the police firing.

Ms. Patkar visited the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital where she met victims recovering from gunshot wounds sustained during the firing. She also called on the Collector and raised her concerns about the deployment of police force in the city and the ‘late-night arrests’.

TAMIL NADU

Why no FIR against police: Brinda



STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 19, 2018 00:00 IST

Says steps taken by the government should actually mean closure

CPI (M) Polit Bureau member Brinda Karat on Monday asked why even a single first information report (FIR) had not been filed against police officers following the firing on anti-Sterlite protesters, in which 13 people died.

Speaking to media persons here after visiting the families of the victims, Ms. Karat demanded an independent inquiry into the firing under the purview of the Madras High Court. She also participated in a public meeting convened to condemn the police firing during the protests.

Although the district administration had earlier denied permission for the meeting, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court gave the go-ahead with a few caveats.

She accused the Narendra Modi government at the Centre of allowing

expansion of Sterlite Copper plant, which had been embroiled in a number of cases for flouting environmental laws. “Vedanta is a generous donor to the BJP. This is a direct result of the Modi government’s ‘ease of doing business’ policy and crony capitalism,” she said, and alleged that the approval was given with disregard to the environmental laws.

Ms. Karat condemned the late-night arrests of protesters and alleged that false cases were being slapped on many of them. “Why is the National Security Act being used on the protesters?” she asked, adding: “What the government wants is to protect the company’s security.”

She said steps should be taken to ensure permanent closure of the plant. “When a notification is issued by the government for closure, it should mean closure,” she said. “There should be no loophole to allow the company take advantage of it later,” she added.

The NDA and the UPA governments at the Centre and the AIADMK government in the State should be held responsible for the present problem, she said.

Ms. Karat also urged the government to remove copper slag from the plant. “During our visit, we found small mounds of copper slag there. If it rains, it will seep down and pollute groundwater. It is a cause for concern,” she said. The CPI (M) would collect funds for the welfare of the victims of police firing, she added.

Earlier, Ms. Karat submitted a representation to Collector Sandeep Nanduri and met Superintendent of Police Murali Rambha and Inspector General of Police (South Zone) Shanmuga Rajeswaran.

Why is the National Security Act being used on the protesters?

Brinda Karat

CPI (M) Polit Bureau member

TAMIL NADU

Evacuation of sulphuric acid begins



STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 19, 2018 00:00 IST

Company authorities to arrange for the sale of the acid to other plants

Officials started removing sulphuric acid from the Sterlite Copper plant on Monday after an acid leak was confirmed on Sunday. The removal process is expected to continue on Tuesday.

Nearly 1000 tonnes of ‘weak’ sulphuric acid is stored in the plant, an official told The Hindu .

Five tanker lorries have been engaged to transport the acid pumped out of the storage unit.

Sulphuric acid, one of the by-products in the copper smelter plant, is usually

553

sold to other plants. “The acid is useful for a number of other companies, and it will be sold to them,” Collector Sandeep Nanduri told reporters here.

The Sterlite Copper authorities would arrange for the sale of the acid recovered from the plant, he added.

The leak was detected during a routine inspection of the plant by security and police officials. It was confirmed on Sunday evening after a special team of officials headed by Sub-Collector M.S. Prasanth, including District Environment Engineer of the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board P.S. Livingston, District Safety Officer and officials from the Inspectorate of Factories visited the plant

TAMIL NADU

'Interest on Sterlite's deposit for public welfare'

STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 19, 2018 00:00 IST

Collector Sandeep Nanduri on Monday said that the nearly Rs. 41-crore interest that has been accrued on a Rs. 100-crore deposit by Sterlite Copper would soon be fully utilised for the welfare of surrounding villages.

Mr. Nanduri said that an administrative sanction for projects worth Rs. 25 crore had already been done and the projects were nearing completion.

The Supreme Court in 2013 had slapped a penalty of Rs. 100 crore on Sterlite Copper for flouting the environmental laws. The money was put in a fixed deposit and the interest was to be used for improving the environmental conditions in the vicinity of the plant.

RTI query

However, an RTI query filed by environmental activist Nityanand Jayaraman found that only Rs. 7 crore from the interest has been used for various projects.

TAMIL NADU

HC dismisses advance bail plea of lawyers

STAFF REPORTER

JUNE 19, 2018 00:00 IST

Bench asks them not to shy away from police inquiry

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Monday dismissed the anticipatory bail plea of advocates S. Vanchinathan and K. Hariragavan, who were booked for participating in the anti-Sterlite protest.

Justice G. R. Swaminathan, while dismissing the petitions, said the advocates should not shy away from police inquiry. The court took cognisance of the submission that a mob indulged in widespread acts of violence. Not only was the Collectorate targeted, but the residential blocks of Sterlite employees too were vandalised, the court said.

The Bench said that it would refrain from going into the firing, but the violence was to be noted. Though Section 144 CrPC (prohibitory order) was in place, it was defied.

The petitioners (advocates) had taken the lead role in organising the agitation, though they could not be blamed for the sporadic incidents of violence, the court observed. It added that the petitioners could not be fastened for penal liability on an incident.

Additional Advocate General K. Chellapandian said that prior to the shooting incident a mob destroyed 200 vehicles and close to 72 policemen were injured. It was only after this the police resorted to shooting. The agitators knew about the prohibitory order, which was announced well in advance, he said.

Rebutting the charges, petitioners' advocates T. Lajapathi Roy and G. Prabhu Rajadurai said it was only after the police firing that the violence broke out.

MAKE WAY FOR WATER

Water gushes down the Hogenakkal falls in Dharmapuri as the Kabini Reservoir was opened | R ANANDHAKRISHNAN

'Since State police are involved, firing case is fit for CBI inquiry'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Chennai

PRESIDING over the first bench of the Madras High Court, Chief Justice Indira Banerjee on Monday opined that the Thoothukudi firing incident is a fit case to be probed by the CBI.

Since the State police are involved, the case can be investigated by the CBI, the bench, led by the CJ, the other member being Justice P T Asha, orally observed when a PIL petition from advocate S Rajinikanth came up for hearing on Monday.

This is the fourth PIL filed on the issue. The bench already ordered notice on the earlier petitions, including one from advocate AP Suryaprakasam during the summer vacation.

In his petition, Rajinikanth submitted that the police had an intention of killing the protesters. This was evident from the weapons they used. The guns used were intended for killing enemies in wars. They had positioned themselves on top of vans. It showed that their target was the upper portion of the bodies of the agitators. Apprehending that the government may protect the police, he

prayed that the investigation may be transferred to the CBI. He also prayed to the court to direct the government to register murder cases against the police personnel and to pay ₹5 crore each to the families of the 13 firing victims.

Earlier, Advocate-General Vijay Narayan pointed out that Justice Aruna Jagadeesan, a retired judge of the High Court, has already been nominated to go into the issue.

The Bench then directed the State to file its counter and the petitioner to file a rejoinder, if any, and posted the matter to July 6.

Sterlite seeks limited access for safety audit

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

FOLLOWING the acid leak on Sunday, the Vedanta Group has requested 'limited manpower access and minimal power supply' to carry out maintenance and safety audits.

In a statement on Monday, claiming that the company was already assisting local the administration to handle the situation, the company spokesperson said, "anticipating such incidents in the absence of regular maintenance, we have been requesting the State government to give us limited manpower access and minimal power supply so that mandatory safety audits at the smelter unit can be regularly carried out. That request is still pending."

The statement further said the company had no access to the plant since it was sealed.

A sulphuric acid leak was detected in one of the storage units of the sealed unit on Sunday evening.

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Tue, 19 June 2018

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Brinda Karat for HC-monitored inquiry into Thoothukudi firing

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Thoothukudi

CPM Politburo member Brinda Karat said that the cases related to Thoothukudi firing should be investigated under the direct supervision of the High Court, "as it is suspicious to note that none of the policemen who gunned down the Anti-Sterlite protesters were booked in any case."

Brinda Karat, flanked by the state central committee members Vasuki and Sambath and Thoothukudi CPM unit secretary KS Arjunan visited the villages near Sterlite Copper unit here and enquired about the police violence here on Monday. She also met with the family members of those killed during the police firing on May 22 and consoled them.

Addressing media persons, Karat said that the police firing at the anti-Sterlite protesters can never be justified and justice should be rendered to the victims. "At Madathur, over 70 to

'Its a ploy to begin repair works'

Thoothukudi: Even as the district administration is taking efforts to remove the sulphuric acid from the Sterlite's Copper unit, the anti-Sterlite movement activists condemned it, terming it as a ploy to begin the maintenance work at the copper smelter premises. Activist Thamil Manthan a mere GO could not shut down such a large scale unit. A policy decision of the state government and a resolution at the assembly would strengthen the GO, he said.

75 women were staying at the temple there in order to escape from the illegal police searches," she said.

Suspecting the credibility of the ongoing investigations, Karat questioned why the district

police had not registered even a single case against the policemen who had shot to kill the anti-Sterlite protesters, even though the police firing had been video graphed.

Slamming at the industrial policies of the Central government, Karat said that Thoothukudi firing was a direct result of the crony capitalism. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi led government had made ease of doing business in India instead of checking the implementation of anti-pollution norms to protect the environmental resources. Modi, sitting in Delhi, gives approvals for the industries and expansion proposals, not bothering about its hazardous nature. The State government back here in Tamil Nadu too supported it for political gains, she added.

Karat questioned the utilisation of ₹100 crore deposited by the Sterlite Copper on account of penalty, for improving the environment in villages.



Thoothukudi firing fit case to be probed by CBI, observes CJ

Dist administration starts removing acid

The district administration has begun preliminary works of removing sulphuric acid from the Sterlite Copper premises. This follows a complaint on a minor leakage at storage tanks of the solution. District collector Sandeep Nanduri said that removal of acid was being done on a war-footing. **P5**



Indira Banerjee

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

PRESIDING over the first bench of the Madras High Court, Chief Justice Indira Banerjee on Monday opined that the Thoothukudi police firing incident in which 13 people were killed was a fit case to be probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Since the State police are involved, the case can be investigated by the CBI, the bench, comprising

the CJ and Justice P T Asha, orally observed when a PIL petition from advocate S Rajinikanth came up for hearing. This is the fourth PIL filed on the issue. The bench already ordered notice on the earlier petitions during the summer vacation.

In his petition, Rajinikanth submitted that the police had an intention of killing protesters. This was evident from the weapons used, he said. Apprehending that the government may protect the police, he

prayed that the probe be transferred to the CBI. He asked the court to direct the government to register murder cases against the police personnel and pay ₹5 crore each to families of the 13 victims.

Earlier, Advocate-General Vijay Narayan said retired HC judge Aruna Jagadeesan had been nominated to probe the issue. The Bench directed the State to file its counter and the petitioner to file a rejoinder, if any, and posted the matter to July 6.

EXPRESS READ



No anticipatory bail for lawyers in Sterlite case

HC says, as organisers of protest, the two should not shy away from responsibilities

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Madurai

THE Madurai Bench of Madras High Court dismissed the anticipatory bail petitions filed by two advocates, accused of instigating violence during the protest against Sterlite in Thoothukudi on May 22.

The court noted that the petitioners, being organisers of the protest, should not shy away from their responsibilities and face police interrogation.

The petitioners - S Vanchinathan and K Hariraghavan, advocates and members of People's Rights Protection Centre who were apprehending arrests contended that they did not indulge in any kind of violence during the protests and that they were present at the spot only to provide legal assistance to the protesters by facilitating talks with the government authorities.

However, the Additional Advocate General (AAG) Chellapandian who appeared on behalf of the State opposed granting advance bail and contended that the petitioners had violated the prohibitory order enforced by the district administration and also instigated the protesters who

possessed petrol bombs and stones which were used to damage public properties that subsequently led to the loss of 13 lives. He told that court that both the advocates be held responsible.

Hearing the submissions of both sides, Justice G R Swaminathan observed that though the State had not

submitted any evidence showing the physical act of petitioners inducing the riot, it cannot be disputed that the petitioners had gathered the mob who violated the prohibitory order promulgated by the district administration.

Denying anticipatory bail to the petitioners, the Judge said that the petitioners, being the organisers for the protest, should face interrogation of the investigating authorities since it was necessary to find the cause of the riot.

Meanwhile, the Judge granted anticipatory bail to three persons - S Sunil of Kanniyakumari and G Madasamy and V Senthil Kumar of Thoothukudi - who had also approached the court apprehending arrest in connection with the protest, since there was no opposition from the prosecution.



To find cause of riot

Denying anticipatory bail to the petitioners, the Judge said that the petitioners, should face interrogation of the investigating authorities since it was necessary to find the cause



HC rejects pre-arrest bail pleas of lawyers booked in Sterlite stir

Madurai, June 18: The Madras High Court bench here on Monday dismissed the anticipatory bail pleas of two lawyers, members of an ultra-Left outfit, booked by the police on charges of instigating protests against Sterlite's copper unit in Thoothukudi last month that turned violent. Justice G R Swaminathan dismissed the petitions filed by Vanchinathan and Hariraghavan, who are members of "Makkal Athikaram", apprehending arrest in the case. During the previous hearing, the court had restrained the police from arresting the advocates and posted the petitions to today for further hearing. Police had registered cases against the two lawyers under various Indian Penal Code Sections including 506(2)(criminal intimidation) 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharging duty) and the Tamil Nadu Public Property (Prevention of Damage and Loss) Act. They have also been accused of instigating a section of the protesters to indulge in the violence. In their petitions,



they had contended that they were in no way connected with the violence that broke out during the protest, demanding closure of the Sterlite unit leading to police firing which left 13 people dead on May 22 and 23. The advocates claimed that they were in the riot-hit areas of Tuticorin only to provide help to the people and advise the Anti-Sterlite People's Federation, which had been demanding the closure of the unit citing environmental concerns. The petitioners alleged that the police had registered the cases only to stifle freedom of speech.

— PTI

Thoothukudi firing: Fit case for CBI probe, HC observes

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 18

In what could be a shot in the arm for political parties protesting against the police-firing incident in Thoothukudi, the Madras High Court Chief Justice Indira Banerjee on Monday said that it would be appropriate for the Thoothukudi shootings to be investigated by the CBI. She was responding to the Makkal Arasu Katchi chief and advocate S. Rajinikanth's petition, which seeks that the policemen, who had shot at the protesters, be booked for murder.

When the PIL filed by Rajinikanth came up for hearing before the first bench headed by Justice Indira Banerjee, she observed it is a fit case to be enquired by CBI. She



Indira Banerjee

also said when the State Police are involved it is a fit case to be enquired by CBI.

The advocate general Vijay Narayan submitted that the Government had already ordered a retired High Court Judge as one man commission of enquiry to go into the incident. Later, the Bench directed the State to file the counter and posted the matter to July 6.

In his petition, Rajinikanth submitted that police opened fire at

peaceful protesters with advanced gun models on May 22, 2018 and these weapons could be used only against the enemies in war.

The police personnel climbed over a police van and took position before shooting. They chose to shoot at the upper body of the protesters. Many persons sustained injuries only on the upper parts of their body.

Fearing that the government is trying to conceal the facts and hence appointed a namesake committee, he sought a direction from the Court for constitution of a judicial enquiry committee headed by a sitting high court judge to enquire into the illegal activity of the authorities in the police firing at Thoothukudi on May 22. ■ **P4**



‘No state official will bring out truth in Sterlite shooting’

FROM P1

The vacation bench had heard three PILs relating to the police shooting against anti-Sterlite protesters on May 22. In another PIL, with a similar prayer, filed by advocate AP Suryaprakasam, the vacation bench ordered notice.

In his petition Suryaprakasam submitted that no state official will make an honest investigation to bring out the truth about the naked police excess. Hence, Suryaprakasam said that it is necessary that only central agency, which is answerable only to the special bench of the high court, has to investigate the shooting. Only this would infuse confidence among the people. After ordering notice to CBI, the vacation bench on May 25 had directed Home Secretary, Tamil Nadu to consider the representation ⁵⁶³ of AP Suryaprakasam.

STERLITE: WOMEN LEADERS FUME

Jaya regime had space for protests but not now: Medha

M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 18:

Noted social activists and founder-member of the National Alliance of People's Movement (NAPM) Ms Medha Patkar on Monday charged the Narendra Modi government with diluting environmental laws that "results in Sterlite-like issues".

Recalling the long-drawn struggle against Sterlite since 1998, when she had participated in an anti-Sterlite protest in Thoothukudi, Medha Patkar alleged that the successive state and the central governments since then had not taken any cognizance of the real issues, despite the High court orders and the National Green Tribunal's rulings.

"At least the previous Central government in 2013 had taken some action when pollution and violation of environmental laws by the copper smelter was pointed out," she said, adding, that after May 2014, when Narendra Modi government assumed office, the environmental laws passed previously were diluted in favour of the corporates. "Just as he (Narendra Modi) had taken the decision to construct the Narmadha dam without



rehabilitating the 40,000 people displaced, the Central government also played a role here in Sterlite," accused Medha Patkar, who also charged the Central government of doing this under pressures from the corporates.

Ms Patkar also came down on the present Tamil Nadu government, whose anti-democratic actions like arresting all those who voiced against Sterlite had acted as an instigation for a peaceful people's movement turning violent. "Though former Jayalalithaa never met the organised people in the anti-Sterlite issue, there was a space available for the people to protest against the copper smelter plant, but the present state government in Tamil Nadu is absolutely insensitive towards the natural resources issues and right to life issues," stated Medha Patkar. She also demanded deterrent action against all those responsible for the police firing here on May 22-23.

CPM suspects 'biased' enquiry into police firing

DC CORRESPONDENT
THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 18:

The CPI (M) Politburo member Ms. Brinda Karat suspects that the enquiry into the police firing in Thoothukudi would not be fair and demanded a High Court monitored probe.

Speaking to media persons after meeting district collector Sandeep Nanduri and South zone IG Shanmuga Rajeswaran and placing before them the grievances of the villagers whom she visited on Monday morning, she asked why not even a single case was registered against police personnel who shot to kill 13 people for protesting against Sterlite's copper smelter plant.

The CPI(M) delegation led by her was not convinced about the explanation of the South zone IG who told them that cases would be registered against police only on the outcome of the commission of enquiry that is on.

"This clearly shows that the enquiry is biased in favour of police," said Ms. Brinda Karat who demanded a High Court monitored enquiry by an independent body.

She also blamed the administration for not initiating any developmental



Ms Brinda Karat

projects in the villages around Sterlite by spending the interest amount accrued on the fine of ₹100 crore deposited, based on the Supreme Court ruling. "None of the villagers or the grama sabhas were consulted for the implementation of programmes by spending the interest amount, which as per our information is around ₹45 crore now," said Brinda Karat.

District collector Sandeep Nanduri, however, said that projects to the tune of ₹25 crore have been given administrative sanctions and a fresh proposal for the rest of the interest amount (₹20 crore) submitted two months ago is awaiting administrative sanction. "The principal amount of ₹100 crore collected as fine from Sterlite could not be spent as per the court order," he explained.

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Medha Patkar, Brinda Karat visit victims, slam Centre and state

TNN | Jun 19, 2018, 12.39 AM IST

TUTICORIN: Activist and founder of the national alliance of people's movements Medha Patkar and CPM politburo member Brinda Karat visited Tuticorin on Monday to interact with people injured during the May 22 police firing. Patkar said the government is insensitive towards natural resource and right to life issues. She held Sterlite, the state government and the Union government responsible and called them inhuman, unconstitutional and unacceptable.

“People have now realised that the present state government is absolutely insensitive towards natural resource and the right to life issues. Here the culprits should be punished with all possible deterrent action,” she said.

The activist also came down heavily on the BJP government at the Centre. She said the Centre has been diluting all the laws, regulations and orders that were previously passed. She said that since the BJP government came to power in May 2014 they have permitted establishing large industries and complexes with negative environmental impacts. In the Tuticorin Government Medical College Hospital she interacted with a few persons who were injured in the police firing.

One of them was 23-year-old Princeton of Millerpuram whose right leg has been amputated from the thigh following a bullet injury in the vein. She also consoled families of those killed in the police firing.

Meanwhile, Brinda Karat said that all NSA detentions and cases against the protesters should be quashed. She termed Sterlite issue a result of the BJP-led government at the Centre and the state government. Demanding permanent closure of Sterlite she listed out various violations made by the plant and its adverse impact on thousands of people living near the plant.

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

CPM doubts credibility of probe

TNN | Jun 19, 2018, 12.38 AM IST



TUTICORIN: CPM politburo member Brinda Karat has questioned the police for not registering any case against the policemen who were caught on video and photographs while firing at the public that left 13 people dead on May 22 and 23. "Though a state appointed commission is probing the issue there is a bias in registering the FIRs," she said.

She pointed out at the cases registered against thousands of innocent people without proof. During her interactions with journalists she also said that all NSA detentions and false cases against the protesters should be quashed. She termed Sterlite issue a result of the Modi Government, those before him and the present Government of Tamil Nadu.

Demanding permanent closure of Sterlite, she listed out the various violations by the plant and its adverse impact on thousands of people around it.

The CPM has made an appeal to the government after collecting the names of children of those who killed in the police firing and made an appeal to the government to fully fund their education. "Some of the children are in 10th to 12th standard and they need help as their bread winner is dead," she said.

Earlier in the day Brinda Karat interacted with women and kin of those injured and who got killed in the police firing and the families affected in the riots in Madathur, Kumarattiyapuram, Pandarampatti and Murugesan Nagar. She also met the collector and inspector general of police, south zone, and made a representation to them on seven key demands before addressing the protest meeting in the evening.

Brinda Karat visits victims



STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 20, 2018 00:00 IST

A day after participating in a public meeting condemning the police firing during the May 22 anti-Sterlite protests, CPI(M) Polit Bureau member Brinda Karat on Tuesday morning visited the victims who sustained bullet injuries at the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital.

After meeting them, Mrs. Karat said that her party would raise the issue in the Parliament during the upcoming session.

Pat for GH

She also appreciated the efforts taken by the GH for treating the victims.

TAMIL NADU

CBI probe into police firing would have been ideal, says CJ



Mohamed Imranullah S.

CHENNAI, JUNE 20, 2018 00:00 IST

Expresses doubt over efficacy of an inquiry by forensic experts

Madras High Court Chief Justice Indira Banerjee on Monday told the counsel for a public interest litigation petitioner that the latter should have sought a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the May 22 and 23 police firing incidents at Thoothukudi, in which 13 people were killed, instead of seeking a direction to the State government to constitute a team of forensic experts to enquire into the issue.

Presiding over the first Division Bench along with Justice P.T. Asha, the Chief Justice wondered what purpose would be served by constituting a team of forensic experts.

Later, she adjourned the hearing on the petition till July 6 after directing Special Government Pleader E. Manohar to ensure that a counter-affidavit was filed by then on behalf of the State government. The petitioner was also given liberty to file a rejoinder before the next hearing.

‘Commission formed’

During the course of the hearing on Monday, the Special Government Pleader told the Division Bench that the government had already constituted a commission of inquiry led by Justice Aruna Jagadeesan, a former judge of the High Court, and therefore, there was no necessity to constitute a team as prayed for by the litigant, S. Rajanikanth.

The petitioner’s counsel argued that the commission would not help in unravelling the truth.

Apart from a team of forensic experts, the petitioner had sought payment of compensation of Rs. 1 crore to the families of the victims, suspension of the police officers involved in the firing, registration of a case of murder against them and a direction to the government to reveal all official orders that were passed to quell the protests.

TAMIL NADU

Complaint filed against CPI(M) cadre

STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 20, 2018 00:00 IST

The police on Monday filed a complaint against CPI(M) party functionaries for disobedience of an order passed by the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court stating that not more than 1,000 people should be present at the public meeting organised by the party.

The complaint was filed at the Thoothukudi South police station against CPI(M) district secretary K. S. Arjunan and 1,720 others, including 215 women who participated in a meeting held near Chidambara Nagar bus stop, under IPC Section 188 (disobedience to order promulgated by public servant). The Madurai Bench while giving the nod for the meeting, had imposed a few riders. The court said that not more than 1,000 people should gather and none other than Brinda Karat and U.Vasuki should address the gathering.

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Sterlite moves HC, seeks power and access

TNN | Jun 20, 2018, 01:18 AM IST



MADURAI: Nearly a month after the police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters left 13 people dead, the copper plant's parent firm, Vedanta Limited, has moved the Madras high court for restoration of power and permission to access the plant for carrying out maintenance work.

The move comes in the wake of an acid leak detected by police and district administration a few days back from the sulphuric acid tank. The petition is likely to come up for hearing on Wednesday. In its plea, the company said the state government has disconnected electricity for extraneous reasons and to appease protesters without taking into account the safety of the plant. The abrupt disconnection of power has hit administrative functions and is causing hardship to its employees working

in the plant.

Sterlite: Govt should have safely shut down plant

The petition stated, "The government ought to have taken opinion from industry experts on safe shutdown of the plant."

The move is in line with company's earlier statement on Sunday night, in the wake of the acid leak noticed in the plant.

"Anticipating such incidents in the absence of regular maintenance, we have been requesting the state government to give us limited manpower access and minimal power supply so that mandatory safety audits at the smelter can be regularly carried out,"

the company said in its statement. "That request is still remains pending," it added.

Further, the petition also sought directions to allow them to safely evacuate and tend to all materials stored within the plant, based on the chemical inventory list prepared by the government.

TAMIL NADU

Woman television artist arrested

Special Correspondent

CHENNAI, JUNE 21, 2018 00:00 IST

A woman television artist, who made some critical comments on Facebook in May against the police after the firing on anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi, was arrested by the Vadapalani police in Coonoor on Wednesday.

Clad in police uniform, actor Nilani, who dons the role of an Assistant Commissioner of Police in a TV serial, had circulated a video asking people to come forward in large numbers and protest against the crackdown.

The clip went viral on social media as many people thought that she was a uniformed officer.

Impersonation charge

Based on a complaint, the Vadapalani police booked a case against her under Sections 419 (Punishment for cheating by personation), 153 (Wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot) and 500 (Punishment for defamation) of the Indian Penal Code and 66 D (Punishment for cheating by personation by using computer resource) of the Information Technology Act.

People's movements being crushed in State: Patkar



STAFF REPORTER

CHENNAI, JUNE 21, 2018 00:00 IST

Slams Edappadi government for 'anti-people' policies

People's movements are being constantly crushed like never before in Tamil Nadu, said activist and Narmada Bachao Andolan leader Medha Patkar at a press meet in Chennai recently.

“Last year alone, 15,000 people were moved to the resettlement colonies. People have been uprooted and left bereft of jobs, education and every livelihood opportunity,” she said.

'Anti-people policies'

Ms. Patkar further criticised the State government and Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami for implementing 'anti-people' policies affecting thousands of slum dwellers. “It is hence proven that urban beautification is only done at the cost of those at the base of this system. But let's not forget that these are the same people whose services keep the city going,” she said.

Recalling the violence at Thoothukudi that led to the death of 13 people, she

criticised the Centre for providing clearance to companies like Sterlite without realising the magnitude of pollution and contamination to the environment. “At least in 2013, the previous government had not given the firm a clear sanction but later they kept receiving regular clearances. The rule in the country today is corporate rule,” she said.

She also condemned the arrest of activist Piyush Manush, who has been protesting against the expansion of the Salem airport. “Manush, Mansoor Ali Khan and Velmurugan were arrested because they raised their voices against the State. Arresting them sends out a message that the country is no more democratic,” she said.

Plea seeks compensation from Sterlite Copper

STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, JUNE 21, 2018 00:00 IST

Rs. 10 cr. demanded to each of families of deceased

A public interest litigation petition was filed before the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Wednesday seeking a compensation of at least Rs. 10 crore each to the families of those killed in Thoothukudi police firing from Sterlite Copper. The petitioner also sought an additional Rs. 620 crore from the company for rehabilitation of people in the affected areas.

The petitioner, S.P. Vijay Nivas, said that the operation of Sterlite Copper in Thoothukudi had exposed the region to air and water pollution. For over 24 years, people had been affected by hazardous waste and agriculture was also affected.

He said that the protesters were continuously voicing against the company in the wake of environmental hazards. Appropriate compensation should be paid to families of those killed in the police firing during anti-Sterlite agitation.

A division bench of Justices C.T. Selvam and A.M. Basheer Ahamed adjourned the case by a week observing that the principal seat was seized of the matter.

TAMIL NADU

Sterlite protest: HC seeks records



STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, JUNE 21, 2018 00:00 IST

Not served notice during hearing of protesters' bail plea: State

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Wednesday called for video evidence, if any, and reports filed before a vacation court, while hearing the case filed by the State which sought cancellation of bail of anti-Sterlite protesters. The State contended that a vacation sessions court in Thoothukudi had granted bail to at least 65 anti-Sterlite protesters without serving notice to the prosecution.

Justice G. R. Swaminathan, who took up the plea for hearing, called for the documents and adjourned the case till June 27.

The State, in its plea, claimed that as many as 65 persons were arrested on May 23 and cases booked against them for indiscriminately attacking and

injuring policemen. The cases were filed under Sections 147 (punishment for rioting), 148 (rioting, armed with deadly weapon), 324 (voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons or means), 341 (punishment for wrongful restraint) and 435 (mischief by fire or explosive substance with intent to cause damage) of the Indian Penal Code and Section 3 of the Tamil Nadu Public Property (Prevention of Damage and Loss) Act, 1992.

A vacation sessions court granted them bail without serving notice to the prosecution. The State sought quashing of the bail granted to the 65 protesters stating that it was denied a chance to offer an explanation.

TODAY'S PAPER

'Thoothukudi in for a catastrophe'

B. Tilak Chandar

JUNE 21, 2018 00:00 IST

Vedanta wants to remove acid stocks

Vedanta, the holding company of Sterlite Copper, has claimed that at least eight tanks of sulphuric acid left unattended in its sealed copper smelter plant in Thoothukudi could lead to a catastrophe.

The company also claimed that the sulphuric acid leak, which was detected on Saturday evening and described as "minor" by Thoothukudi District Collector Sandeep Nanduri, could have been an act of sabotage, with minimal security posted at the unit.

Plea to restore power

In a petition before the Madras High Court (Madurai Bench) seeking immediate restoration of electricity supply to Sterlite Copper, the company said other inflammable substances and materials needed to be removed immediately.

"A continuous monitoring of the plant is necessary. If acid comes in contact with water, it will cause vigorous reactions," the petition by Sterlite general manager (Legal) A. Satyapriya said.

Urgent intervention

Following an inspection, it was detected that there was a sulphuric acid leakage in the plant from the pipe flanges.

These could not be arrested as the pipe flanges are submerged in the acid pool collected in the dykes provided around the storage tank.

This needs urgent intervention and the acid needs to be cleared immediately.

Claiming that authorities were not showing concern over the issue, the petition sought the restoration of electricity to remove and dispose of the inflammable materials, solid and raw materials waste and chemicals.

Plea seeking compensation adjourned

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Madurai

THE Madurai Bench of Madras High Court adjourned a Public Interest Litigation filed by an advocate seeking a compensation of ₹750 crore from Vedanta Group for the rehabilitation of people affected by its copper manufacturing unit in Thoothukudi.

The division bench comprising Justices C T Selvam and A M Basheer Ahamed, though admitted the litigation, adjourned the case saying that the decision on the litigation would be taken based on the outcome of the other related cases against the company regarding the same issue, which are pending before the Principal Seat at Madras High Court.

Vijay Nivas, an advocate from Sivagangai had approached the court praying it to pass orders directing Vedanta Group to pay a compensation of ₹10 crore each to the 13 people, who died in police firing during the protest against the company and also deposit a sum of ₹620 crore into the Chief Justice Relief Fund for the rehabilitation of people who have been affected by the company since its inception.



Acid production takes a hit due to Sterlite Copper's shutdown

Domestic supply of sulphuric acid, hydro fluo silicic acid and gypsum affected

S GODSON WISELY DASS @Thoothukudi

IN the wake of the shutdown of Sterlite Copper in Thoothukudi, a string of industries depending on its by-products such as sulphuric acid, phosphoric acid, hydro fluo silicic acid and gypsum have been hit badly.

According to sources, the Sterlite Copper premises in Thoothukudi had a sulphuric acid plant to capture the hazardous sulphur-di-oxide during the copper production process. Having a sulphuric acid plant with an annual capacity of 13 lakh tonnes, Sterlite held 95 per cent of the market share in Tamil Nadu. Sulphuric acid has a wide range of chemical applications and is used as a cleansing agent for the Effluent Treatment Plants (ETP) in textile, detergent and tannery industries, which were dependent on Sterlite for supply.

The plant also used half the sulphuric acid produced for producing phosphoric acid. The phosphoric acid plant with a production capacity of 2.30 lakh tonnes per annum was established to support the fertiliser industry.

Phospho gypsum, in great demand from the cement manufacturing units in Tamil Nadu, was also generated in the phosphoric acid plant. Sterlite supplied phospho gypsum to 30 cement manufacturing factories across India.

With Sterlite becoming non-operational since March 26, this year, the domestic supply of sulphuric acid, phosphoric acid, hydro fluo silicic acid and gypsum was badly impacted. It had a cascading effect among the recipient companies across South India. The short supply of sulphuric acid caused market prices to shoot up.

The shortage of Sterlite's by-prod-



Thoothukudi Sub-Collector coming out from the Sterlite Copper Industry after the inspection on the leakage at sulfuric acid storage tanks in the company on Wednesday | EXPRESS

ucts has left many industries in the lurch. Some of the industries in Thoothukudi District and other districts have also shut down production while some have reduced production substantially, said another source.

A Thoothukudi-based private company producing Sodium Fluorosilicate (Na_2SiF_6), a major raw material used in the glass industry, has been shut down for the past two months due to the non-supply of Hydro Fluo Silicic Acid from Sterlite. The company used to procure 300 to 400 tonnes of Hydro Fluo Silicic Acid from Sterlite every month, and export 200 to 250 tonnes of Sodium Fluorosilicate to various countries, including the USA, every month.

A large-scale fertiliser manufacturer functioning on the Thoothukudi-Tiruchendur Road has shut down its

Market prices shoot up

With Sterlite becoming non-operational since March 26, the domestic supply of sulphuric acid, phosphoric acid, hydro fluo silicic acid and gypsum was badly impacted. The short supply of sulphuric acid caused market prices to shoot up

unit due to the unavailability of sulphuric and phosphoric acid, officials from the company said.

Requesting anonymity, a member of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the shutdown of the copper smelter had indeed affected the industrial prospects of the state and that it may lead to an industrial crisis in Tamil Nadu.



Govt view sought on Sterlite

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Madurai

ADMITTING the petition filed by Vedanta Group seeking restoration of electricity supply and manpower access to its copper smelter unit in Thoothukudi, the Madurai Bench of Madras High Court sought the actual status from the State, and asked whether power supply was required to clear the leakage of the sulphuric acid in the Sterlite plant.

A division bench comprising Justices C T Selvam and A M Basheer Ahamed directed the Additional Advocate General (AAG) K Chellapandian to get instructions from the State officials whether electricity supply and the presence of people of

the company were really necessary to remove the hazardous materials from the plant as claimed by the petitioner company.

Refusing to pass interim order on the petition, the Judges also directed, orally, whether the district administration was ready to allow the expert team of the Sterlite to accompany the government officials during their visit to the plant. Further, the case was adjourned to June 25.

Earlier, the Vedanta Group approached the court seeking restoration of power supply and permission for its authorities and experts to enter the Sterlite Copper plant for removing the leaked acid as well as other hazardous raw materials.



26 HELD FOR MEET AGAINST SALEM-CHENNAI GREEN CORRIDOR

Event convened by Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam under the All India Kisan Sabha; detainees later released, farmers vow to strengthen protests

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Tiruvannamalai

THE ongoing protests against the proposed green corridor between Salem and Chennai had its reverberations in Tiruvannamalai after 26 people were detained and later released by the district police for convening a meeting against the project on Wednesday.

The meeting was convened by Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam under the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) which is affiliated to the Communist Party of India (Marxist). "While the preparatory works for the meeting were underway at Vada Andhapattu near the medical college hospital, the police intervened and demolished the stage set for the meeting," alleged Alagesan, a CPM

functionary.

Following the police intervention, organisers decided to conduct a meeting at the office of Vivasayigal Sangam. Around 400 farmers, who could be affected by the project, were supposed to attend the meeting. As the farmers were going towards the meeting



We have unanimously concluded that we will fight against the eight-lane green corridor between Salem and Chennai until it is withdrawn by the central and state governments

A farmer

venue, the police detained C K Venkatesan, district head of AIKS, S Balaraman, assistant district head of AIKS, and 24 farmers.

Knowing about the detention of farmers, around 400 people, led by P Shanmugam, state general secretary, AIKS; Sivakumar,

district secretary, CPM; Abhiraman, organiser of Anti-Committee of Eight-lane Green Corridor Project; Vijoo Krishnan, all India joint secretary, AIKS and Delhi Babu, former MLA of Aroor concluded the meeting and marched towards the SP office to demand the release of detainees, who

were released later. Sources said that it was a preventive arrest and the members had not sought permission to convene a meeting. However, the members strongly condemned the action taken by police as the meeting was arranged in a private place at Vada Andhapattu in Tiruvannamalai

Taluk. This arrest was not a preventive one and this was done to stifle our voices, they said.

"We have unanimously concluded that we will fight against the eight-lane green corridor project until it is withdrawn by the central and state governments. We have been reiterating that if the project is implemented, it will have irreversible damage to the environment as many hectares of forest and agriculture lands will be destroyed and our livelihoods will be destroyed," said a farmer who participated in the meeting.

"We are going to hoist black flags at the houses of all farmers in Kancheepuram, Tiruvannamalai, Dharmapuri and Salem districts on June 26, and will burn the Government Order (GO) in front of the collectorates on July 6," added Alagesan.



A month on, fear of men in khaki reigns in Thoothukudi

Men who fled from villages after the incident have not yet returned

NIRUPAMA VISWANATHAN

@Thoothukudi

A month after 13 people were killed in police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi on May 22-23, the sight of men in khaki still evokes fear and resentment among residents here.

Said Karuppusamy of Kumarareddiyarpuram, the village that spearheaded the protests against the copper smelter plan, "For the first 99 days of the protests, our villagers would bring tea to policemen posted here on duty. Around a 100 of us who sat in protest would cook together here in the open, and we never failed to invite the policemen everyday for lunch.

"We would never have thought that they would fire at us without a second thought and even now, continue to terrorise our men by picking them up in the middle of night in the name of inquiry."

Parvathi of the same village

recollects her neighbour Palraj, a 55-year-old auto driver, being picked up by police well after midnight.

"Both his legs were injured in the protests, but they still dragged him to the station," she said.

According to the villagers, Pal-

THOOTHUKUDI REVISITED

raj was last seen 13 days ago. Men who fled, mainly from areas like Kumarareddiyarpuram, Madathur and Anna Nagar, are yet to return.

A 55-year-old man smartly paces up and down the corridors on the fifth floor of the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital where those injured in the protests had been admitted.

Asked when he is getting dis-

charged, he said, "I'm perfectly fine now. The doctor said I could leave. But my neighbours who came to visit me said the police came to our neighbourhood in search of me. So I've put off going home," he said.

One of the first resolutions passed among the country craft boats' general panchayat, Therespuram after the firing was to exercise utmost caution before participating in another protest.

"Here, fishermen have been strongly involved in these causes but end up being made villains by police. We have decided not to participate in any protests unless all permissions have been granted," said member MRR Bose.

For Thangam, the images of 17-year-old J Snowlin, who was killed in the firing, keeps her awake at night, even after a month.

(Full names of persons withheld at their request)



Govt's response sought on power supply to Sterlite

Madurai Bench asks State if power supply is required to arrest leakage from plant

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Madurai

ADMITTING the petition filed by Vedanta Group seeking restoration of electricity supply and manpower access to its copper smelter unit in Thoothukudi, the Madurai Bench of Madras High Court sought the actual status from the State, and asked whether power supply was required to clear the leakage of the sulphuric acid in the Sterlite plant.

A division bench comprising Justices CT Selvam and AM Basheer Ahamed directed the Additional Advocate General (AAG) K Chellapandian to get instructions from the State officials whether electricity supply and the presence of people of the company were really necessary to remove the hazardous materials as claimed by the petitioner.

Refusing to pass interim order on the petition, the Judges

also directed, orally, whether the district administration was ready to allow the expert team of the Sterlite to accompany the government officials during their visit to the plant. The case was adjourned to June 25.

Contending that the abrupt disconnection of power supply,

without proper intimation had led to severe acid leakage from the plant, the authorities of the copper smelter said that it was necessary to restore the power supply. It was argued that the only the experts belonging to the company knows how to handle the leakage of the sulphuric acid and the details of the hazardous raw materials stored inside the plant and hence it was necessary to allow the experts from the company to take part in the evacuation process. Re-

'Allow our experts'

Earlier, the Vedanta Group approached the Court seeking restoration of electricity and permission for its authorities and experts to enter the plant for removing the leaked acid as well as other hazardous raw materials present

butting this, AAG contended that government machinery was on full swing and was taking necessary steps to evacuate the acid from the plant.



Video clip: TV actress arrested in Coonoor

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 20

TV serial actress, Nilani, whose controversial video condemning the police firing in Thoothukudi on May 22, went viral on the social media, was finally arrested on Wednesday from her 'hideout' in Nilgiris.

The actress, who in police attire had released the video shortly after the Thoothukudi incident, has been keeping low at her relatives house in the tea plantation dominated district. The arrest came when the police from the Vadapalani police station in Chennai finally managed to trace the absconding actress aged 34, hiding in one her rel-

atives house at outskirts of Coonoor town in Nilgiris.

After the whatsapp video she posted went viral, the Vadapalani police registered a case against her based on a private complaint, for allegedly making derogatory remarks against cops and the government in the video she had posted. She went absconding once the police case was registered against her. All these days, the cops had been on their toes to trace and arrest her.

On Wednesday evening the cops from Chennai arrived at Kambisholai area in Bearhatti panchayat limits near Coonoor and nabbed her as she was found staying in her relatives house therein Kambisholai. Police sources said



Nilani

that mobile phone tracking helped them to zero in on the actress who arrived at her relatives house in Kambisholai area in the recent past. Later in the evening, the cops produced the actress at the Judicial Magistrate court in Coonoor.

Police said that she will be taken to Chennai and pro-

duced before the court at Saidapet on Thursday.

In Chennai, police sources said after the video went viral, the police department which booked a case against Nilani under five different sections, organised teams and searched at many places. Finally she was traced in Coonoor.

In the video clip she said she despised the police firings and lashed out at the department. The video had featured Nilani in police attire for a serial shoot.

She was seen saying, "I am ashamed to be wearing the police uniform after the brutal firings. They are trying to make Tamizhans into terrorists, but we are protesting peacefully."

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Sterlite: Acid leak could lead to environmental hazards

TNN | Jun 21, 2018, 12.54 AM IST

Madurai: Vedanta Ltd., Sterlite's parent company, which filed a petition before the Madurai bench of the Madras high court, following the detection of acid leak in one of the storage tanks, has said that any leakage, if not noticed in time and in the event of it coming in contact with water (in case of rains), could lead to environmental hazards.

When the petition came up for hearing on Wednesday, a division bench of justice C T Selvam and A M Basheer Ahmed observed that the court was afraid that the plant was a tinderbox.

Sterlite's counsel informed the court that they would share with the government authorities on what needed to be done to arrest the leakage. "We are ready to handover a detailed plan, including requirements of manpower," the company's counsel informed the court.

Additional advocate-general (AAG) K Chellapandian told the court that he had to get instructions from officials concerned and sought time to respond to the petition. "We are answerable if anything happens. We would be targeted first," the AAG told the court. To this, the bench responded that it is the safety aspect which is more important than who will be targeted or who will be maligned.

The court then adjourned the hearing to June 25.

According to the petition, the company explained the risk of abrupt shutdown to the authorities after the closure order was issued by the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) on May 23, and wrote to them on May 25 and May 26 seeking minimum electricity to maintain emergency services and to avert any disaster due to leakages.

In its petition, Vedanta said their personnel received a 'WhatsApp message' from a TNPCB engineer on the night of the acid

leak and when they inspected the site on June 17, they found that there was a severe leakage from pipe flanges.

“It cannot be arrested as the pipe flanges are submerged in acid pool collected in the dykes provided around the tank,” the petition stated, adding that they contacted the district collector the same day seeking minimum supply of electricity and manpower to evacuate the acid at the earliest.

Advocate who led anti-Sterlite stir held

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, JUNE 22, 2018 00:00 IST

Booked for taking part in protests

The police arrested a Madurai-based advocate, who spearheaded the anti-Sterlite agitation in Thoothukudi, at the Chennai airport on Wednesday.

Vanchinathan arrived from New Delhi after attending proceedings in the Supreme Court. After his arrest, he was taken to Thoothukudi.

Mr. Vanchinathan, along with another advocate K. Hariragavan, was booked for participating in the protests and being responsible for the violence. In their petition filed last week seeking advance bail from the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court, the advocates said that they had peacefully protested seeking closure of the plant and were not involved in any kind of violence during the protest.

Meanwhile, People's Watch executive director Henri Tipahgne condemned the midnight arrest of Mr. Vanchinathan. "What was the need for such urgency, when the HC Bench's order dismissing the advance bail plea was yet to be made available to the advocates on record," he asked. This was nothing but a tactic to threaten the people who voiced concerns against the government.

The Save MKU Coalition also condemned the arrest, calling it an autocratic move. "We will go to the court and seek legal remedy," said R. Murali.

Thirumavalavan files PIL

Mohamed Imranullah S.

CHENNAI, JUNE 22, 2018 00:00 IST

Thirumavalavan files PIL against police firing

Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi leader Thol. Thirumavalavan has filed a public interest litigation petition in the Madras High Court seeking a court monitored probe into the police firing incidents in Thoothukudi district during the protests against the Sterlite Copper smelting plant on May 22 and 23. Thirteen people were killed in the shooting. His petition is expected to be listed for admission before the first Division Bench of Chief Justice Indira Banerjee and Justice P.T. Asha on Friday.

Key figure in anti-Sterlite movement arrested for May 22 violence

GODSON WISELY DASS @Thoothukudi

A key figure in the anti-Sterlite movement, S Vanchinathan, was arrested by police at Chennai airport Wednesday night. The state coordinator of People's Rights Protection Centre, a wing of Makkal Athikaram, was produced before a magistrate in Thoothukudi on Thursday.

Vanchinathan, who is also the Madurai district secretary of Makkal Athikaram, Madurai, has been named the seventh accused in an FIR registered on May 22. The advocate at the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court, was a key figure behind the anti-Sterlite protests having provided legal support alongside advocates Hariraghavan, Thoothukudi district secretary of Makkal Athi-

karam, and Rajesh of Pandarampatti. He got court permission for the anti-Sterlite rally in Thoothukudi on March 24.

Sources said that these advocates were actively involved in the protests against the copper smelter since June 2017.

They are said to have played a vital role in mobilising public for the May 22 rally to besiege the Thoothukudi collectorate demanding permanent closure of the plant. However, police opened fire at the protesters and subsequently violence spread across the district.

The FIR registered against the advocates at the SIPCOT police station in Thoothukudi, and assessed by Ex-

press, revealed that the three advocates were among seven accused and were booked under Sections 147, 148, 188, 353, 506 (II) of the Indian Penal Code and 30F of Tamil Nadu Property Prevention of Damage and Loss Act (TNPPDLA) for vandalising barricades, resisting police and torching vehicles at FCI roundabout, where the violence began on May 22.

Others named in the FIR are Kamaraj and Ponpandi of Madathur, Elavarasan and Arulraj of Meelavittan. Persons close to Vanchinathan said that the charges against him were false and that he had not been involved in any violence. Police are still searching for Hariraghavan and Rajesh.

HC HAD REFUSED THEM BAIL

Vanchinathan and Hariraghavan had moved an anticipatory bail application at Madurai bench of Madras High Court, which was dismissed on June 18. The judge directed them to face police interrogation as they were among the leaders of the Anti-Sterlite movement.

A month on, fear of men in khaki reigns in Thoothukudi

NIRUPAMA VISWANATHAN @Thoothukudi

A month after 13 people were killed in the police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi on May 22 and 23, the very sight of men in khaki still evokes fear and resentment among residents in the coastal district even as life has otherwise returned to normalcy.

Said Karuppusamy of Kumarareddyarpuram, the village that spearheaded the protests against the copper smelter plan, "For the first 99 days of the protests, our villagers would bring tea to policemen posted here on duty. Around a 100 of us who sat in protest would cook together here in the open, and we never failed to invite the policemen everyday for lunch.

"We would never have thought that they would fire at us without a second thought and even now, continue to terrorise our men by picking them up in the middle of night in the name of inquiry." P5

THOOTHUKUDI
REVISITED



No re-postmortem on life convict's body

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Madurai

THE Madurai Bench of Madras High Court dismissed a petition praying for re-postmortem of Bharath Raja, a life convict, who, allegedly, committed suicide while in police custody.

While on parole, Bharath Raja was arrested in connection with the violence during anti-Sterlite protest in Thoothukudi.

Bharath alias Bharath Raja had been languishing in Central Prison since 2003. He had come to Thoothukudi on a week's parole on May 17 to attend a relative's wedding function. However, Bharath Raja was arrested by po-

lice on May 23 in connection with the violence that happened during the anti-Sterlite protests in Thoothukudi and, allegedly, ended life while in police custody.

Following his death, the petitioner J Selva Sounder, had approached the court claiming foul play on the part of police in Bharath Raja's death and related it to the other deaths that occurred during the police firing in Thoothukudi protest.

A division bench comprising Justices C T Selvam and A M Basheer Ahamed, hearing the petition, came to the conclusion that Bharath Raja's death did not

have any connection with the killings that happened during the protest and hence he could not be considered as a victim of the protest.

The judges, after hearing the submissions of the Additional Advocate General (AAG) K Chelapandian who appeared on behalf of the State and scrutinising the video evidence and the postmortem reports submitted by police, were convinced that the cause of Bharath Raja's death was indeed suicide and dismissed the petition saying that there were no merits in conducting a re-postmortem.

Police told to close FIR

The Madurai Bench of Madras High Court has directed Thoothukudi police to close an FIR filed against CPM functionary Arjunan, for non-compliance of court order regarding a public meeting held at Thoothukudi. The meeting saw the participation of more than 1,000 people that was in violation against the court order. An FIR was filed by Thoothukudi police.



People close to Vanchinathan claim charges in FIR are false

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

THE FIR registered against the advocates at the SIPCOT police station in Thoothukudi, and assessed by *Express*, revealed that the three advocates were among the seven accused and were booked under Sections 147, 148, 188, 353, 506(11) of the Indian Penal Code and 30F of Tamil Nadu Property Prevention of Damage and Loss Act (TNPPDLA) for vandalising barricades, resisting police and torching vehicles at FCI roundabout, where the violence began on May 22. Others named

in the FIR are Kamaraj and Ponpandi of Madathur, Elavarasan and Arulraj of Meelavittan. Persons close to Vanchinathan said that the charges against him were false and that he had not been involved in any violence.

Vanchinathan and Hariraghavan had moved an anticipatory bail application at Madurai bench of Madras High Court, which was dismissed on June 18. The judge directed them to face police interrogation as they were among the leaders of the Anti-Sterlite movement. Subsequently, police arrested Vanchinathan.

THE NEW
**INDIAN
EXPRESS**

Fri, 22 June 2018

epaper.newindianexpress.com/c/29736395



CPI-ML to observe protest day in TN on June 26

Karur: The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) on Thursday strongly condemned the Tamil Nadu Government's attempts to repress the general public who are agitating for various just and reasonable demands, said the party's state president S. Kumarasamy. He told newsmen at Karur that the government's failure to take suitable action against erring police personnel in the recent police firing at Thoothukudi, besides the 'continuing police excesses' in different parts of the state showed there is an "undeclared emergency" in Tamil Nadu. It was decided to observe a protest day against all these things on June 26, besides undertaking a rally between Tirunelveli and Tiruvallur on that day, he added, while condemning the Salem-Chennai expressway project.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Lawyer accused of engineering Sterlite stir held in Chennai

TNN | Jun 22, 2018, 01:07 AM IST

Madurai: Two days after the Madurai bench of the Madras high court dismissed the bail petition of Makkal Adhigaram lawyers accused by the state of engineering anti-Sterlite protests, Tuticorin police arrested one of them, S Vanjinathan at the Chennai airport late on Wednesday night.

A special team headed by inspector F Poulraj rounded up Vanjinathan around 11pm, police sources said. According to sources, he was returning from Delhi when he was arrested by the police.

A practising advocate at the Madras high court's Madurai bench, Vanjinathan along with another advocate Hari Raghavan of Tuticorin were booked by the police under several Sections of the IPC, including 353 (criminal force to deter public servants from carrying out duty), 148 (rioting with deadly weapons) and Section 3 of Tamil Nadu Property (Prevention of Damage and Loss) Act.

Both of them are district secretaries of Makkal Adhigaram in their respective regions.

On Monday (June 18), the court denied advance bail to the duo. Justice G R Swaminathan had observed that the two lawyers, as organisers cannot escape responsibility. "The petitioners (lawyers) do not dispute the fact that they were the leaders (of the protests)," the court said adding, "As many as 13 persons have died in the protests. The petitioners should not stand shy of police interrogation."

The counsel for the lawyers had argued that Vanjinathan and Raghavan went to Tuticorin only to render legal assistance. Meanwhile, Vanjinathan's arrest was widely condemned by social activists. "Vanchinathan is not only a lawyer but a human rights defender engaging in different human rights issues and therefore by virtue of the rights contained in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, enjoys the right to protest, dissent, criticise, associate, express and organise people as a lawyer and human rights defender," Henri Tiphagne, executive director of People's watch said.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Madras HC refuses to quash appointment of panel

TNN | Jun 23, 2018, 01:55 PM IST



MADURAI: The Madurai bench of the Madras high court has refused to pass any directions on a petition seeking to quash the one-woman commission appointed by the state to probe the incidents that led to police firing in Tuticorin on May 22.

Tuticorin CPM district secretary, K S Arjunan filed the petition seeking to quash the appointment of the Aruna Jegadeesan commission.

The first bench comprising justice C T Selvam and A M Basheer Ahmed while admitting the petition refused to pass any directions on the petition. The bench, however sought a reply from the state government regarding the government order (GO) which said the law and order situation led to

the police firing. The hearing has been adjourned to June 27.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Anti-Sterlite protests: CB-CID sleuths in Tuticorin to probe violence, police firing

PTI | Jun 23, 2018, 05:17 PM IST



TUTICORIN: A team of CB-CID officials on Saturday arrived here to conduct an on-the-spot probe, inspection and assessment of the areas where the anti-Sterlite protesters 'resorted to violence,' leading to police firing that claimed 13 lives on May 22 and 23.

The officials inspected the Collectorate where government vehicles were torched, and the Sterlite quarters, where two-wheelers were set ablaze, police said.

In addition, the sleuths visited the godown of the Food Corporation of India, Anna Nagar, Terespuram, V V D signal, Pani Maya Matha church etc and collected material evidence from the places, they said.

Some cartridges used by the police and live bullets were seized at the spot where the firing took place, the police said.

CB-CID Superintendent of Police, Praveen Kumar Abhihnav, who is camping here, said more than 100 people were injured in the violence and subsequent police firing.

Five cases have been registered.

Each case was being investigated by an official in the rank of DSP, and 20 inspectors were deputed for the probe, he said. The Tamil Nadu government had last month ordered a CB-CID probe into the violence during the anti-Sterlite protest in Tuticorin and police firing that left 13 dead.

Thirteen people were killed in police firing on May 22 and 23 after protests by residents demanding closure of the copper plant over pollution concerns turned violent, in the port city.

TAMIL NADU

Plea seeks copy of prohibitory order

STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, JUNE 24, 2018 00:00 IST

A public interest litigation petition was filed before the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court seeking a direction to the Thoothukudi Collector to produce the copy of prohibitory order clamped in parts of Thoothukudi under Section 144 of CrPC during the anti-Sterlite protest.

The petitioner, advocate A.W.D. Tilak of Thoothudi, said that though an application was made under RTI Act for production of the prohibitory order issued by the Collector, it was not furnished.

The petitioner alleged that the police had misused their statutory powers and had illegally detained people at various places without documenting such arrests. People were being detained illegally at the Armed Reserve Camp in Millerpuram. The petitioner sought as an interim direction a 24-hour panel of lawyers to provide assistance to those detained illegally. He also sought a restraint against indiscriminate detentions and arrests in Thoothukudi.

■ Sterlite clean-up process continues in Thoothukudi 'Other flammable liquids also to be taken out soon'

M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 23

The other flammable substances stored at Sterlite copper industry in Thoothukudi too would be evacuated based on the report of the high level technical committee that thoroughly inspected the factory site, according to Thoothukudi district collector, Mr. Sandeep Nanduri.

Briefing on the ongoing process of the evacuation of sulphuric acid that commenced last Monday, following the reported leakage of the acid from its storage tank, the collector said that so far around 1,500 tonnes of sulphuric acid has been evacuated out using 85 acid tanker lorries. "A very small quantity is yet to be removed from the storage tank and the process would be completed another day" said Mr. Nanduri.

The collector also added that a high level expert committee comprising of two retired professors from Anna University and IIT-Madras, district environmental engineer, TNPCB, district fire officer and inspector of factories have already done a thorough study about the

Don't repeat Thoothukudi at Salem: TN BJP chief

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARUR, JUNE 23

Tamil Nadu BJP president Dr Tamilsai Sundararajan took strong exception over the reported remarks of DMK working president M K Stalin against the Governor Mr. Banwarilal Purohit that the Governor was interfering with the State administration. It is purely based on grudge, she said addressing a press conference here on Saturday.

Dr Tamilsai was here for a party function to distribute welfare measures to the needy by the BJP's youth wing. She reminded Mr. Stalin that Mr. Purohit was a former Lok Sabha member



and he knew his powers and limits. If there was any interference in the government administration, it was for the Chief Minister, Edappadi K Palaniswami to talk about it, she said.

Referring to the land acquisition for the proposed eight-way green

corridor between Chennai and Salem, she said the state Government should create adequate awareness among the agitated people besides sanctioning increased compensation for the land. The BJP leader said while anti-socials can be arrested, innocent people, farmers and women should not be arrested under any circumstance. "There should not be another Thoothukudi incident there (in Salem)," Dr Tamilsai cautioned.

Others present at the function included BJP's national youth wing president, Ms Poonam Mahajan, state youth president Vindo P Selvam and Union minister, Pon. Radhakrishnan.

status of the other flammable substances like phosphoric acid, LPG and diesel stored at the Sterlite complex. "We are waiting the committee's report

based on which we would decide on evacuating those substances too," Mr. Sandeep Nanduri added.

The sulphuric acid evacuated from the copper

smelter plant, however, were reportedly sold to the dying units and the detergent manufacturers in Tirupur, Coimbatore and Salem regions, he added.

Process will be completed within another day: Dt collector Other flammable liquids also being removed from Sterlite

M. ARULOLI | DC
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Image used for representation purpose.

yet to be removed from the storage tank and the process would be completed within another day," said Mr. Nanduri.

The collector also added that a high level expert committee comprising two retired professors from Anna University and IIT-Madras, district environ-

mental engineer, TNPCB, district fire officer and inspector of factories have already done a thorough study about the status of the other flammable substances like phosphoric acid, LPG and diesel stored at the Sterlite complex.

"We are awaiting the committee's report based

● Experts have already conducted a study on the status of other flammable substances stored at the Sterlite complex and will soon file a report, based on which evacuation of those substances too will be carried out soon

on which we would decide on evacuating those substances too," Mr. Sandeep Nanduri added.

The sulphuric acid evacuated from the copper smelter plant, however, were reportedly sold to the dyeing units and the detergent manufacturers in Tirupur, Coimbatore and Salem regions, he added.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

CBCID begins probe into Tuticorin shooting

TNN | Jun 24, 2018, 05.28 AM IST



MADURAI: The CBCID team on Saturday began its probe into the bloodied shooting that claimed 13 lives in Tuticorin on May 22. The investigating teams, including forensic experts, bomb disposal experts and CBCID personnel arrived at Tuticorin on Saturday and carried out enquiries and held consultations with the local police officers.

CBCID Additional SP Marirajan first visited the collector's office premises where the shooting took place and inspected the site. They will also visit the other places, including Palayamkottai Main road, Tuticorin government hospital premises, Anna Nagar Main road and Therespuram, in the next two days.

Meanwhile, Tuticorin collector Sandeep Nanduri, who met the media in Tuticorin on Saturday, said that a total volume of about 1500 metric tonnes of sulphuric acid was removed in 85 tankers from the premises of the Sterlite plant. The work is expected to be completed by Sunday night, he said.

The collector added that a high-level committee comprising retired professors of the Anna University and IIT in Chennai, pollution control board officers and inspector of factories has inspected the factory and that the next course of action would be taken based on their report.

On March 22, the anti-Sterlite protestors marching to the Tuticorin district collectorate turned violent when the police started firing at the agitators. The shooting left as many as 13 persons, including two women, killed and scored of wounded.

A number of public and private properties and vehicles were damaged while some of them set on fire as the violence intensified on the day. A total of 128 cases were registered in this regard while persons were arrested in this connection. Five of the cases on the shooting were transferred to the CBCID.

TAMIL NADU

Plea seeks relief for illegal detention

STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, JUNE 26, 2018 00:00 IST

A petition was filed before the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Monday seeking compensation for those who were illegally detained at the Vallanadu shooting range in Thoothukudi on May 22, following the anti-Sterlite protest.

The petitioner, S. Chandrasekar, an advocate from Thoothukudi, said that 94 people were detained by the police for over 24 hours at the Vallanadu shooting range and Pudukottai police station on May 22.

The advocate claimed that he filed a petition before the Chief Judicial Magistrate against the illegal detention, who directed the Judicial Magistrate to look into the issue. The illegal detention came to light after the Judicial Magistrate in his powers under Section 97 CrPC (search for persons wrongfully confined) found out that at least 94 persons were detained by the police. The police also failed to produce the arrest memo to the Judicial Magistrate, the petitioner said.

The JM took note of the treatment meted out to the detenus, who complained that they were not even given medical assistance. The JM filed a detailed report to the CJM. The next day, 29 persons were released by the police. The rest were later granted bail, he said.

Cases were foisted against the protesters, who were subjected to inhuman treatment by the police, the petitioner said. A division bench of Justices M. Duraiswamy and Anita Sumanth adjourned the case by a week.

TODAY'S PAPER NATIONAL TAMIL NADU

TAMIL NADU

NCSC team to visit Thoothukudi

STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 26, 2018 00:00 IST

Officials from the National Commission for Scheduled Castes would arrive in the city on a three-day visit on Thursday to probe the May 22 anti-Sterlite agitation.

The officials would investigate the death of four persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes, who were among the 13 killed in police firing. The Commission has also invited others from the community to come forward and share their views during its visit.

TAMIL NADU

CB-CIB team collects cartridges

STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 26, 2018 00:00 IST

The special team of officials of Crime Branch-Criminal Investigation Department (CB-CID) probing the May 22 anti-Sterlite agitation has collected evidence, including cartridges fired by the police during the violence.

Sources said two cartridges, lodged in a wall of a house at Anna Nagar here, were recovered on Sunday.

Continuing their search for the third consecutive day on Monday, the CB-CID officials went to Tharuvaikulam dump yard and also examined the vehicles which were damaged during the violence. A senior official told The Hindu that the search operations might continue on Tuesday.

'Follow legal procedures while conducting Thoothukudi probe'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Madurai

PASSING orders on a petition filed against harassment by police during investigation into the anti-Sterlite protest in Thoothukudi, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court gave instructions to the government to follow the legal procedures while conducting the investigation.

P Santhanasekar, an advocate and district council member of CPI in Thoothukudi, in a petition, submitted that police personnel attached to various police stations in the district, searched for him in his house in the night hours of June 13 and 14, without following any rules stated in the law.

The petitioner further submitted that though he was part of the protest, he was unarmed and did not indulge in any violence. He prayed to the court to issue directions to the police not to harass him in the guise of investigation.

Justice D Krishnakumar directed the police to follow the appropriate procedures prescribed by the law while conducting investigation. Police should proceed to take action only if there is any evidence against the protestors proving their involvement in instigating violence, said the judge.

Evacuation of acid completed

Thoothukudi: The evacuation process of the sulphuric acid from the Sterlite Copper premises had been completed, said Collector Sandeep Nanduri during a press brief held after the weekly grievance redress meeting here on Monday. He said he was awaiting further orders from the government regarding the process. Sandeep Nanduri said that the over 2124 tonnes of sulphuric acid stored in a dyke had been dispatched to the recipient units functioning at different places in the state. Over 95 tankers were pressed into action to evacuate the acid, he added.

The collector said that the other acids present at the plant too would be moved out.

Vanchinathan's wife files habeas corpus

Madurai: Nandini, wife of advocate S Vanchinathan, who was recently arrested in connection with the anti-Sterlite protest in Thoothukudi, has filed a Habeas corpus petition at the Madurai Bench of Madras High Court, seeking interim order restraining the State government from invoking any preventive detention against him under National Security Act, 1980. She prayed the court to direct the police to furnish details of the cases pending against Vanchinathan. The petitioner submitted that her husband, Vanchinathan participated in the protest only to provide legal assistance.

Baba Ramdev tweets in support of Vedanta

Chennai: In a controversial tweet, yoga guru Baba Ramdev has thrown his weight behind Vedanta Sterlite and claimed international conspirators were behind the recent protests in Thoothukudi. He tweeted a picture with Vedanta's executive chairman Anil Agarwal and his wife in London and said, "I salute his contribution in the national building process by creating lakh of jobs and economic prosperity." It was followed by another tweet saying, "International conspirators created ruckus at one of Vedanta's plants in South of India through innocent local people. Industries are the temples of development for the nation. They should not be closed," Ramdev said. Within no time, he was trolled in the social media and many called him 'insensitive' for not giving any heed to environmental and life loss.



Thoothukudi firing: Deadline for submitting affidavits extended

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Thoothukudi

THE one-man commission headed by retired Justice Aruna Jegadeesan has extended the time for submitting the affidavits related to the recent police firing at anti-Sterlite protesters here to July 27. The notification made public through an advertisement also reveals change of protocols regarding the firing that took place on May 22. The instances of firing on May 23 and 24, and the subsequent issues are unlikely to be probed by the commission.

The State government had appointed the commission on May 23 to probe the unwarranted firing and the subsequent clashes in the area. Justice Aruna Jegadeesan began the probe with a field visit on June 4 in Thoothukudi and recorded statements from the family members of the deceased persons and also from those injured. She also asked the public to submit the evidence in the form of an affidavit at its office in Chennai or Thoothukudi on or before June 22. The date was later extended to June 30.

The notification also stated

that the commission will inquire into the facts behind the police shooting and the subsequent clashes, life loss and injuries, public and private property damages, and the law and order issues. The commission would also probe to verify if sufficient forces were used and if the protocols were followed properly before the shooting order was given, apart from confirming whether there were any instances of violation by the police. It would recommend required actions against the guilty in case of violation.

The last date for submitting the affidavits was reportedly extended to July 27 owing to public request.

The key change in the recent notification is that those who know anything related to the incident, whether directly or indirectly, may submit the information in the form of an affidavit. Whereas, the previous notification sought affidavits only from those who directly knew about the incident and instances related to it.

The revised format came up after CPM district secretary KS Arjunan filed a PIL petition at the

Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court, challenging the term of reference of the commission which was investigating only the May 22 incident, besides thwarting the participation of the general public in the probe as only those directly involved allowed to submit the affidavit. "The Commission of Inquiry Act, section 5(2)(b) of Rules 1972, allows persons who are in acquaintance with facts to depose before the Commission," Arjunan claimed.

"The Commission should investigate the firing on May 23 in which a 22-year-old was killed at Anna Nagar. The firing in air at the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital on May 24 and the subsequent events that happened too should be probed. As the police have created a fear psychosis among those injured and the families of the deceased, the previous notification prevented many of the direct victims to submit affidavits. It also paved the way for easy detention by the police as only those related to the firing incident and violence reached the Commission's office," said Arjunan's counsel advocate Subu Muthuramalingam to *Express*.

Disclose all facts

Key change in the recent notification is that those who know anything related to the incident, whether directly or indirectly, may submit the information in the form of an affidavit. Whereas, the previous notification sought affidavits only from those who directly knew about the incident. The change came up after CPM district secretary KS Arjunan filed a PIL petition at the Court



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THE TIMES OF INDIA

PIL seeks relief for those detained after anti-Sterlite protests

TNN | Jun 26, 2018, 12.53 AM IST

Madurai: A public interest litigation (PIL) has been filed before the Madurai bench of the Madras high court on Monday seeking compensation for those who were illegally detained in Valanadu shooting range after the anti-Sterlite protests in Tuticorin. The petition, filed by an advocate, S Chandrasekar of Tuticorin also sought departmental inquiry against the police officials attached to Morappanadu and Pudukottai police stations in Tuticorin district for rounding up the people.

Justice M Duraiswamy and justice Anitha Sumanth before whom the petition came for hearing admitted the PIL and posted the matter for hearing next week.

After the police firing on May 22 in which 13 people were killed and several injured, police rounded up about 96 people and detained them illegally at Pudukottai police station and Valanadu shooting range, according to the petition.

The next day, around 2.30pm on directions from the chief judicial magistrate, the district munsif went to the Pudukottai police station where no one was found. The policemen further refused to give the CCTV footage claiming that it was dysfunctional.

A hour later, the district munsif searched the premises of Valanadu shooting range and found 94 people illegally detained by the police, the petition stated. The petition further added the policemen on duty as saying that those detained were arrested by the Pudukottai police.

“When the magistrate inquired with those detained, they reported that they were arrested from various places in Tuticorin and many of them sustained injuries,” the petition stated.

After this, 29 people were released and 65 were remanded in judicial custody belatedly.

The petition claimed that the detained were brutally attacked in police custody and many of them sustained severe injuries. “They were illegally detained for more than 24 hours and were not provided food or water or proper medical attention for their injuries,” the petition added.

TAMIL NADU

'Guidelines were not followed in Thoothukudi arrests'

STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, JUNE 27, 2018 00:00 IST

239 cases registered by the police, claims PIL petitioner

A public interest litigation petition was filed before the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Tuesday seeking a direction to the Thoothukudi Collector to produce the copy of the prohibitory order clamped in parts of Thoothukudi under Section 144 of Cr. P. C. during the anti-Sterlite protest.

The petitioner, advocate A.W.D. Tilak, said that though an application was made under RTI Act for production of the prohibitory order issued by the Collector, it was not furnished. He alleged that the police had misused their statutory powers and illegally detained people at various places without documenting their arrests.

The arrests were not made in accordance with guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court and Sections 41A (Notice of appearance before police officer), 41D (Right of arrested person to meet an advocate of his choice during interrogation) and 42 (Arrest on refusal to give name and residence) of Cr. P. C. As many as 239 cases had been registered by the police in Thoothukudi, he said.

Before imposing such an order, the District Magistrate must first believe that apprehension of nuisance or danger existed.

The order should be backed by proper evidence. In the absence of such evidence, the District Magistrate could not merely pass a prohibitory order.

The order must be in writing and should be specific and definite. The material facts must be stated and the order must be served, he claimed.

In the wake of people being detained illegally at the Armed Reserve camp in Millerpuram, the petitioner sought, as an interim direction, a 24-hour panel of lawyers to provide assistance to those detained illegally. He sought a restraint on indiscriminate detentions and arrests and a direction to the Chief Judicial Magistrate to inspect the camp.

Taking up the petition for hearing, a Division Bench of Justices C. T. Selvam and A. M. Basheer Ahamed directed notice to the State and adjourned the case by one week for further hearing.

CB-CID search continues

STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 27, 2018 00:00 IST

For the fourth consecutive day, Crime Branch–Criminal Investigation Department officials conducted search operations in relation to the May 22 anti-Sterlite agitation here on Tuesday.

They conducted combing operations along a five-kilometre stretch on both sides of Palayamkottai Road from VVD signal to the Collectorate, where a major part of the police firing took place.

They also continued their search for evidence from vehicles that were damaged or involved in the incident.

Advocate Vanchinathan's wife files habeas corpus plea

STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, JUNE 27, 2018 00:00 IST

The wife of advocate Vanchinathan, arrested on the charges of spearheading the anti-Sterlite protests in Thoothukudi, has filed a habeas corpus petition before the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Tuesday. She sought an order restraining the authorities from invoking detention under National Security Act, 1980 against her husband.

The petitioner A. Nandini claimed that false cases were foisted against her husband and police fabricated confession statements against him. She said that her husband provided legal assistance as an advocate and a civil rights activist and had voiced for the people in their agitation against Sterlite Copper.

Ms. Nandini said that the police did not follow any mandatory procedures while arresting her husband. She said that he was picked up by the police in plain clothes from Chennai Airport on June 20. No intimation was given to the family members on the arrest, she said.

Senior counsel M.Ajmal Khan, representing the petitioner said, "Voice of dissent are being silenced". He questioned as to how a prima facie case was made out to remand Vanchinathan.

However, Additional Advocate General K.Chellapandian said Mr. Vanchinathan was arrested following the charges against him and after his plea for anticipatory bail was dismissed by the High Court Bench.

Taking up the plea for hearing, a Division Bench of Justices C.T.Selvam and A.M.Basheer Ahamed directed status quo be maintained in the case and adjourned the case by a week for further hearing. The court also heard a slew of petitions filed against the police for arresting public under the National Security Act, 1980. The cases have been adjourned to next week.

Mr. Vanchinathan is lodged in the Palayamkottai Central Prison. The Thoothukudi police had booked cases against him.

TAMIL NADU

TN government orders closure of Sterlite copper smelter



J. Praveen Paul Joseph

TUTICORIN (TN), MARCH 30, 2013 12:20 IST

Power supply cut; Vaiko says shutdown victory for local people

Mired in controversy in recent days, Sterlite Industries Limited's copper smelter in Tuticorin was shut down on Saturday.

Operations in the plant came to a standstill in the wake of an order from the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board. Tuticorin Collector Ashish Kumar instructed officials to inspect the Vedanata group company to make sure that the production lines remained shut.

The closure order has come after a gas leak was reported in the early hours on March 23.

Following emission of sulphur dioxide from Sterlite, people in the neighbourhood experienced unease and complained of suffocation, sneezing and burning sensation in the eye.

D. Dhanavel, General Manager, Projects, Sterlite Copper, said the closure order was received on Friday night.

An order was served by Revenue Divisional Officer of Tuticorin, K. Latha, to the company on March 24, seeking explanation for the incident within five days.

A team comprising Revenue Divisional Officer of Tuticorin, officials from the Pollution Control Board, Revenue and Tangedco has been carrying out

inspections at the sulphuric acid plant, the phosphoric acid plant and other plants since 8 a.m., Ms. Latha said.

The Collector, when contacted, told The Hindu that power lines to the company were disconnected.

Tuticorin Tangedco Superintending Engineer, R. Amirtha Rathnakumar, said power was cut at 12.21 a.m. on Saturday.

Activists celebrate

Activists protesting against the functioning of the copper smelter celebrated the shutdown, but the company insisted that it had been in operation for 17 years with all requisite clearances and approvals.

It said it would explain the factual position to the TNPCB and cooperate fully with the authorities so that it could restart operations soon.

Calling it a victory for the local population, Vaiko, general secretary, MDMK, in a statement thanked Chief Minister Jayalalithaa for her decision to close down the smelter. He termed Sterlite as a 'noxious industry' causing harm to the lives of people. Pollution in all forms from Sterlite and its baneful effects impacted the livelihoods of farmers, fishermen and traders as farm lands turned unproductive and groundwater and seawater became unusable.

Palaniswami justifies Sterlite G.O., says violence instigated for political gains

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 26

CM Edappadi K Palaniswami told the Assembly on Tuesday that "certain politicians" had instigated the violence during the Sterlite protests in Thoothukudi for political gains.

His statement was in response to the question posed by the Leader of Opposition and DMK working president MK Stalin as to why the Government Order (GO) for shutting of the Sterlite plant in Thoothukudi was not backed by a Cabinet decision. Stalin insisted that in the absence of such Cabinet nod, the GO could be under threat as Sterlite could move the court challenging it and have the plant reopened.

Responding to this, CM

Palaniswami said the shutting of the plant was a step-by-step decision. After Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) refused the Renewal of Consent, a special team was sent to the plant for inspection. Based on the report submitted by that team, the electricity supply for the plant was cut off.

"There are over 1 lakh such industries in Tamil Nadu, all of which follow a common law. An individual cabinet decision cannot be made for each," he said, clarifying that legal experts and senior officials were consulted before the decision to shut the Sterlite plant was made. These details were all divulged to the Madurai High Court Bench, the CM said.

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Sterlite stir: PIL seeks copy of Section 144 order

TNN | Jun 27, 2018, 01.30 PM IST



MADURAI: The Madurai bench of the Madras high court on Tuesday issued notice to the home secretary, the director general of police (DGP) and the Tuticorin district collector to respond to a petition seeking a copy of the promulgation order issued under Section 144 of CrPC on May 21 and the proof of date, place and mode of promulgation.

Admitting the petition filed by AWD Tilak, ad hoc president of the Tuticorin bar association, the first bench comprising justice C T Selvam and A M Basheer Ahmed issued notices and posted the matter for hearing on July 3.

The petitioner stated that it was known through media reports only that a prohibitory order was imposed from May 21 at 10pm, hours before the 100th day of the anti-Sterlite protests during when people had decided to siege the collectorate.

Thirteen people were killed and several others were injured in the police firing on May 22. The petition said that there are serious doubts and suspicion as to whether Section 144 was imposed at all and if imposed, whether it is a speaking order. "This suspicion is further deepened by the fact that on May 22, then collector N Venkatesh, who is supposed to have promulgated the order was not physically present anywhere in Tuticorin town leaving the field wide open for police to run amok," the petition stated.

The petition also sought an interim direction to appoint a 24-hour panel lawyers in eight police stations in Tuticorin city to ensure people who are detained after the protests have legal assistance. It also sought the court to pass an interim direction to direct the chief judicial magistrate, Tuticorin to inspect the armed reserve camp at Millarpuram.

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Panel has completed Sterlite plant inspection: state tells HC

TNN | Jun 28, 2018, 01:19 AM IST



MADURAI: The expert panel appointed by the state government to assess the acid leak at the sealed Sterlite plant in Tuticorin has completed inspection and would submit its report soon, the state government told the Madurai bench of the Madras high court on Wednesday.

The panel comprises officials from the Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services, Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, directorate of industrial safety and professors from IIT-Madras and Anna University. The panel was appointed by the state after Sterlite's parent company Vedanta moved the high court seeking restoration of minimal power supply at the plant for maintenance and clearing the acid leak, which the company termed as 'severe'.

On Wednesday, when the petition came up for hearing, the state submitted the steps being undertaken. Vedanta's counsel asked the court to allow its personnel to aid the clearing process since they know the plant.

The first bench comprising justices C T Selvam and A M Basheer Ahmed observed that since the state has already taken steps, the company's assistance would not be necessary. The hearing on the petition has been adjourned to a further date.

Vedanta, in its petition, sought an interim direction to restore power supply and manpower access to the plant with appropriate police protection for checking and rectifying the acid leak and maintenance of the plant. The company explained the risk involved in abrupt shutdown to the authorities after the closure order issued by the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board on May 23 and wrote to them on May 25 and May 26 seeking similar demands of minimum electricity supply to avert any disaster owing to leakages.

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Police plea to cancel bail to 65 people dismissed

TNN | Jun 28, 2018, 01:19 AM IST

Madurai: The Madurai bench of the Madras high court on Wednesday dismissed a petition from the Tuticorin police which sought directions for cancellation of bail granted to 65 people by a lower court after the anti-Sterlite protests on May 22.

When a fresh petition filed by the Pudukottai police inspector, R Thirumalai came up for hearing before justice G R Swaminathan last week, the judge asked police to provide video evidence of 65 people indulging in violence and also the report submitted by the police before the magistrate in connection with the incident. A lower court had released all the 65 people on bail on May 24, the same day they were arrested.

On Wednesday, when the petition came up for hearing, the judge observed that the petition is not maintainable since police failed to produce material facts in the case and dismissed the petition.

Tuticorin sessions judge had granted bail to 65 people arrested for being part of a mob during the anti-Sterlite protests on May 22. "The vacation sessions judge, failed to note that by releasing the accused, they would indulge in same nature of offence in future and also there are chances of them tampering with the prosecution case," the petition said.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

NCSC to conduct inquiries into Tuticorin firing incident

tnn | Jun 29, 2018, 12.41 AM IST

Madurai: The National Commission for Schedule Castes (NCSC) will inquire the firing that took place during the anti-Sterlite protests in Tuticorin on May 22 and May 23 and submit its report to the President.

Speaking to reporters on Thursday, vice-chairman of NCSC, L Murugan, said he and his team would conduct inquiries with families of four shooting victims who belonged to the schedule caste communities, the injured and the public.

On the second day, the officers including the district collector, superintendent of police and other officials who were in office when the incident took place would be asked to appear before the commission. The present district collector, superintendent of police and government doctors would be inquired on the third day.

Four people from the SC community - Selvasekhar, Kandaiah, Kaliappan and Jayaraman of Usilampatti were killed during the shooting. The commission may also visit the houses of the deceased people.

TAMIL NADU

High Court grants permission for memorial service

STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, JUNE 30, 2018 00:00 IST

To be held for the 13 persons who died during the recent Thoothukudi riots

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Friday granted permission for the conduct of a memorial service to the 13 persons who died during the recent Thoothukudi riots.

Justice D. Krishnakumar while granting permission for the memorial service imposed certain conditions to be followed, to conduct the event. The organiser was directed to give a fresh representation for consideration to the Thoothukudi Deputy Superintendent of Police on June 30, which shall be considered by July 5.

The Court also directed that not more 50 persons be permitted to participate in the memorial service.

The petitioner P. M. Tamilmandhan of Thoothukudi said that the people of Thoothukudi had been agitating against Sterlite Copper for over 20 years seeking its closure in the wake of environmental concerns. However, on May 22 the peaceful protests turned violent after the police gunned at least 13 persons involved in the agitations. He sought permission for the conduct of a memorial service to the 13 people who perished, as a token of respect.

The petitioner said that his representations to the police seeking a grant of permission were rejected. The rejection was against the principles of natural justice, he said.

He said he had moved the High Court seeking a direction for the grant of permission to conduct the memorial service.

Fishermen allege instigation during anti-Sterlite protest



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 30, 2018 00:00 IST

Submit petition to District Legal Services Authority

A group of fisherfolk submitted a petition to the District Legal Services Authority, accusing two advocates of ‘Makkal Athikaram’ of inciting violence and motivating them “to be fierce” during the May 22 anti-Sterlite protest.

In the petition submitted to the DLSA Sub-Judge R. Samuel Benjamin on Friday, the fishermen said the public meeting organised here on March 24 demanding the permanent closure of Sterlite Copper went off peacefully though a good number of fishermen participated in it.

When the anti-Sterlite protesters took out a procession on April 23 to submit a petition in Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board office with a similar plea, advocates Vanchinathan and Hari Raghavan of Makkal Athikaram “intruded” and started “to brainwash” the youth of Fatima Nagar, Puthu Theru, Cruzpuram, Terespuram and areas around Our Lady of Snows Basilica.

While the fishermen decided to participate in the anti-Sterlite demonstration organised at SAV School Grounds near Old Bus Stand on May 22 following talks held with police officials on May 20, the advocates started a “negative campaign” on social media and “incited” the fishermen to participate in the march towards the Collectorate.

TAMIL NADU

Anti-Sterlite stir: court sends advocate to police custody

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 30, 2018 00:00 IST

243 cases registered in this connection

Advocate Vanchinathan, who has been arrested in connection with the violence that broke out during the anti-Sterlite protest on May 22 here, was sent to three-day police custody by a court here on Friday.

The Thoothukudi SIPCOT, Thoothukudi South and Thoothukudi North police have registered 243 cases in connection with violence that broke out during the anti-Sterlite protest in which 13 persons were killed in police firing and properties worth several crores of rupees were damaged on May 22.

In the case registered at Thoothukudi SIPCOT police, 100 persons including advocate Vanchinathan of Makkal Urimai Paathukaappu Maiyam and advocate Hari Raghavan of Madurai have been accused of violating prohibitory orders clamped under Section 144 of Criminal Procedure Code, damaging police barricades, preventing the government officials from discharging their duties, rioting and torching the government vehicles.

After being arrested in connection with this case by the SIPCOT police, Mr. Vanchinathan was remanded in judicial custody. As the police wanted to inquire him in connection with this case, the police filed a petition seeking custody of Mr. Vanchinathan.

Admitting the prayer, Judicial Magistrate Thamizh Selvi on Friday sent him to police custody till 11 a.m. on July 2.

NCSC inquires senior officials



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 30, 2018 00:00 IST

In connection with Thoothukudi firing in which four Dalits died

National Commission for Scheduled Castes Vice-Chairman L. Murugan inquired the then Collector N. Venkatesh and Superintendent of Police P. Mahendran about the police firing during anti-Sterlite agitation here in which 13 persons, including four Dalits, were killed.

After meeting the Dalit victims' family members on Thursday and visiting the areas that witnessed violence, Mr. Murugan inquired Mr. Venkatesh for an hour from 1 p.m. The former Thoothukudi Collector reportedly narrated the evolution of anti-Sterlite protest and the situation that led to the police firing.

Subsequently, the then District Revenue Officer M. Veerappan, Sub-Collector M.S. Prashanth and other revenue officials appeared before the Commission.

In the afternoon, the then IGP (South Zone) Shailesh Kumar Yadav, DIG (Tirunelveli Range) Kapilkumar C. Saratkar, Mr. Mahendran and the then Joint Superintendent of Police Selvanagarathinam deposed before the Commission.

“After inquiring the present Collector Sandeep Nanduri and Superintendent of Police Murali Ramba, the Commission will submit its report to the President of India,” Mr. Murugan said.

Fishers blame fringe group for Sterlite riot

M. ARULOLI | DC

THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 29

Fishermen from Therespuram in Thoothukudi have accused some advocates belonging to 'Makkal Adhikaram' outfit with instigating the innocent fishermen to violence during the May 22 anti-sterlite procession here which turned violent, leading to police firing.

Requesting legal aid for the fishermen falsely arrested in connection with the Thoothukudi riot and the incidents that followed, around 200 men and women from the coastal community, led by Thoothukudi country craft fishermen association, Robert, submitted a petition with the Thoothukudi district Legal Services Authority on Friday stating that the fishermen have nothing to do with the violence though some of their youths were "brainwashed" to indulge in violence by some of the advocates, alleged to have links with the 'Makkal Adhikaram' outfit.

The fishermen leaders, who also met the Thoothukudi Bar council president, Advocate Tilak, com-

plained that some Bar Council members went around the coastal hamlets for about a week before the May 22 event and instigated the youths to prepare to take siege of the district collector's office.

"They also allegedly campaigned among our people saying that the fishermen community should be ready for any kind of eventuality during the May 22 rally," said Robert, adding, the fishermen believed that the May 22 rally would be a peaceful one like the one organised on March 24, which went off peacefully even though around two lakh people gathered.

The fishermen's complaint even named few advocates associated with 'Makkal Adhikaram'. But a senior advocate, who was one of the 23 members who attended the peace talks convened by the district collector prior to the incident and who also played a crucial role in the Anti-Sterlite movement, felt that the fishermen should not have made such an open complaint, as it could draw a wedge among members of the Thoothukudi Bar Association.

2-DAY POLICE CUSTODY FOR ADVOCATE VANCHINATHAN

Thoothukudi: Police have got two days custody of the high court advocate Vanchinathan, arrested in connection with the Thoothukudi anti-Sterlite riot.

The Madurai based advocate Vanchinathan, one of the prime accused along with another of his colleague, Hariragavan as the brain behind the May 22 riot that claimed 13 lives in the counter action of the police in Thoothukudi, was arrested ten days ago at Chennai airport by the Thoothukudi SIPCOT pol-

ice and lodged at Palayamkottai central prison.

On Friday the advocate was again produced before Thoothukudi judicial magistrate court-III that granted the police two day custody of the accused. Magistrate Tamilselvi in her order said that the advocate should be produced before the court after police enquiry on July 2.

The court too extended remand for twenty more accused arrested and kept under judicial custody in connection with the riot, for 15 more days. —DC

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Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Anti-Sterlite protests: NCSC completes 3-day probe into police firing in Tuticorin

TNN | Jun 30, 2018, 08.55 PM IST



MADURAI: The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) on Saturday completed its three-day inquiry into the police firing on the 100th day of the anti-Sterlite protests that claimed the lives of 13 persons including four Dalits in Tuticorin on May 22 and 23. NCSC vice chairman L Murugan told reporters at Tuticorin that the detailed report on the findings along with the recommendations will be submitted to the President of India in a month.

Murugan told reporters that he has quizzed more than 20 persons including the families of the four Dalits who got killed, public and officials. The officials who were quizzed include the then district collector,

Superintendent of Police (SP), inspector general of police (south zone), deputy inspector general of police (Tirunelveli Range) and the executive magistrates who ordered the firing on May 22 and May 23.

"I also got a detailed report from the dean of the Thoothukudi Government Medical College and Hospital and the present collector and SP on the situation post May 22 and steps taken by the district administration. The collector and SP will be submitting a detailed report to me in seven to 15 days. Villagers said that they are still in fear. So I have asked the collector and SP to ensure that people are out of fear," he said.

The vice chairman said that officials have been instructed to have a check if children from the affected areas are not dropping

out of school, due to various reasons. He said that a few more officials are yet to be inquired by the commission and that they will be summoned to Chennai or Delhi to record their statements. He also said that the commission might come to Tuticorin again to inquire with the public.

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Makkal Adhigaram brainwashed us: Fishermen

TNN | Jun 30, 2018, 01:53 PM IST

MADURAI: Fishermen from Threspuram approached the Tuticorin district legal services authority (DLSA) seeking legal assistance for their community, whom they said are being rounded up by policemen after the anti-Sterlite protests. In their petition, the fishermen numbering 50, claimed that it was Makkal Adhigaram, particularly, advocates Hari Raghavan and Vanjinathan who brainwashed youngsters of the fishermen community into marching towards the collectorate on May 22. Thirteen people were killed and more than a hundred suffered injuries as a result of police firing on May 22 and May 23.

Police recently arrested advocate Vanjinathan from Chennai airport. The state had earlier accused the advocate of engineering the anti-Sterlite protests which led to the violence. According to their petition, leaders from the fishermen community concurred to the Tuticorin police's request to gather at the SAV ground to prevent law and order situation in the coastal town, during a meeting held on May 20, two days before the planned siege of the collectorate was set to happen. However, the leaders were not hurt, but 13 innocent lives were lost, according to a petitioner.

TAMIL NADU

'Court-monitored probe needed'



STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, JULY 01, 2018 00:00 IST

It is the best way to bring out truth in Thoothukudi firing incident

Retired Judge of Madras High Court D. Hariparanthaman said that Madras High Court-monitored investigation was the best available way to bring out the truth and punish those responsible for the recent police firing during the anti-Sterlite protest in Thoothukudi, in which 13 people were killed.

Speaking at a conference organised here on Friday to condemn the killing of protesters and the arrest of advocate S. Vanchinathan for supporting them, he said that despite criticism the judiciary still remained the only hope for justice.

“The Commissions of Inquiry, even if headed by a Supreme Court judge, cannot help. Their investigation will get prolonged and they can only make recommendations to the government,” he said.

He said that in the case of court-monitored investigation, there would at least

be transparency since the police would be made to file periodic reports on the investigation, which could be scrutinised.

Condemning the arrest of Mr. Vanchinathan, Mr. Hariparanthaman said that there must be a demand for doing away with Article 19 (2) of the Constitution that imposed reasonable restriction on freedom of speech and Article 22 that provided room for preventive detention of people.

A number of lawyers and human rights activists spoke at the function, strongly condemning the arrest of 13 people and cases allegedly foisted against Mr. Vanchinathan.

Henri Tiphagne, Executive Director of the non-governmental organisation People's Watch, said that the number of people killed in Thoothukudi protests was in fact 15 as it must include a man killed in police custody and a woman who succumbed to injuries.

He said that a ray of hope was the role played by the subordinate judiciary and lawyers in Thoothukudi to help the affected people, though the judiciary often seemed to stand with the State and corporates.

B. B. Mohan, senior advocate, spoke of the need for advocates to play a bigger role against injustice and "educate the judiciary."

J. Nandhini, daughter of Jayaraman who was killed in the police firing, said, "the government must provide answer for the death of my father and 12 others. I am proud of my father as he died fighting for people. He was not an 'anti-social' as projected by the State."

NCSC concludes probe into police firing

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Thoothukudi

NATIONAL Commission for Scheduled Caste (NCSC) vice-chairman L Murugan on Saturday concluded a three-day investigation into the police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters on May 22 and 23 that claimed 13 lives including four Dalits.

Talking to the press persons, Murugan said that he had asked the district administration to ensure that no child, who was affected in the firing, becomes a school dropped.

Murugan quizzed the families of the Dalit victims -- Kaliappan, Kanthaiyah, Selvasekar and Je-yaraman -- on the first day. He

also questioned the bureaucrats, officials and the special executive magistrates present during the policing firing and the subsequent clashes. The vice-chairman also visited the sites where the police opened fire in the town and the places where the clashes erupted. He also received petitions from the public regarding the police atrocities towards the agitators, apart from enquiring about the current situation of the town after the police firing with Collector Sandeep Nanduri.

Addressing press persons, Murugan said that the commission had conducted a detailed probe into the tragic incident. "Several statements were recorded during the probe. If needed, either a pub-

lic hearing or a revisit would be conducted," he said.

He said that the families of Kaliappan and Kanthaiyah, two Dalits who were shot dead by the police, are badly affected by the loss of their bread winners. "The father of Kaliappan and son of Kanthaiyah are mentally ill. So I have recommended the district administration to provide high level treatment to them," he said.

Murugan had also instructed the district administration to inquire the children of the gunfire victims who are continuing their studies and to ensure that no child is dropped out of the school. He had also asked the officials to prioritise the victims for disbursement of business loans.

Govt to provide artificial limb, job to firing victim

Thoothukudi: State Information and Publicity Minister Kadambur C Raju on Saturday assured G Prinston (22), whose leg was amputated after being injured in the police firing on the anti-Sterlite protesters here, of providing better treatment and artificial limb at the government expense. While visiting the Thoothukudi Medicla College Hospital to meet those who were injured in the firing, the minister said that Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami had directed the officials to provide high treatment and artificial limb to Prinston. He would be given a job too, he added.



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Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Sterlite stir: NCSC completes probe on police firing

TNN | Jul 1, 2018, 01:10 AM IST



MADURAI: The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) on Saturday completed its three-day inquiry into the police firing on the anti-Sterlite protesters in Tuticorin on May 22 and 23 that claimed 13 lives including four dalits. NCSC vice-chairman L Murugan told reporters at Tuticorin that the detailed report on the findings along with the recommendations will be submitted to the President of India in a month.

Murugan said that he has inquired more than 20 people including the families of the dalits who were killed, public and officials. The officials who were quizzed include the then district collector, superintendent of police, inspector-general of police (south zone), deputy inspector general of police (Tirunelveli range) and the executive magistrates who ordered the firing on

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The vice-chairman said that officials have been instructed to check if children from the affected areas are not dropping out of school due to various reasons. He said that few more officials are yet to be inquired by the commission and that they will be summoned to Chennai or Delhi to record their statements. He also said that the commission might come to Tuticorin again to

conduct inquiry with the public.

Among the four dalits who were killed in the police firing are Kandhaiah (on May 22) a Sri Lankan repatriate and Kaliappan (May 23) a youth. Murugan said that Kandhaiah's son and Kaliappan's father are mentally affected and that the district administration has been asked to give good medical attention to them.

When asked if he would recommend registering case under The Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act against the officials and police personnel who have ordered the firing and those who fired, he said that he would be giving his recommendation in this regard only after recording the testimonies of everyone concerned.

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Sterlite stir: NCSC completes probe on police firing

TNN | Jul 1, 2018, 01:10 AM IST



MADURAI: The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) on Saturday completed its three-day inquiry into the police firing on the anti-Sterlite protesters in Tuticorin on May 22 and 23 that claimed 13 lives including four dalits. NCSC vice-chairman L Murugan told reporters at Tuticorin that the detailed report on the findings along with the recommendations will be submitted to the President of India in a month.

Murugan said that he has inquired more than 20 people including the families of the dalits who were killed, public and officials. The officials who were quizzed include the then district collector, superintendent of police, inspector-general of police (south zone), deputy inspector general of police (Tirunelveli range) and the executive magistrates who ordered the firing on

May 22 and May 23.

“I also got a detailed report from the dean of the Thoothukudi Government Medical College and Hospital and the present collector and SP on the situation after May 22 and steps taken by the district administration. The collector and SP will be submitting a detailed report to me in seven to 15 days. The villagers said that they are still in fear. So I have asked the collector and SP to ensure that people are out of fear,” he said.

The vice-chairman said that officials have been instructed to check if children from the affected areas are not dropping out of school due to various reasons. He said that few more officials are yet to be inquired by the commission and that they will be summoned to Chennai or Delhi to record their statements. He also said that the commission might come to Tuticorin again to

conduct inquiry with the public.

Among the four dalits who were killed in the police firing are Kandhaiah (on May 22) a Sri Lankan repatriate and Kaliappan (May 23) a youth. Murugan said that Kandhaiah's son and Kaliappan's father are mentally affected and that the district administration has been asked to give good medical attention to them.

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TAMIL NADU

Sterlite contract workers seek alternative jobs



STAFF REPORTER

KOVILPATTI, JULY 02, 2018 00:00 IST

Submit petition to Minister

Contractors and contract labourers, who lost their jobs after the closure of Sterlite Copper plant, submitted a petition — seeking alternative employment — to Information and Publicity Minister Kadambur C. Raju on Sunday.

Nearly 80 people, including contractors, contract labourers and transporters, met the minister at his office here.

“Over 3,000 contract labourers lost their jobs after closure of the plant. At least 2,000 more who were dependent on the industry have lost their employment,” said S. Thiagarajan, president of Thoothukudi Sterlite All Contract Workers Association.

After the closure, the employees were now seeking credit to pay their bills.

Nearly 50% of the labourers, who belonged to different parts of the country, had left in search of other jobs.

Mr. Thiagarajan said employees at Sterlite Copper received good benefits such as employee safety insurance and provident fund. “The payments are done promptly. In other companies in the district, however, payments, are not made on time and are sometimes even delayed by a year.”

He claimed that rumours led to closure of the plant. “I have never heard of employees affected by cancer.”

The minister said those who lost their jobs due to closure of the plant would get preference for employment when projects such as the Thoothukudi-Madurai industrial corridor, desalination plant and a new ship yard at Thoothukudi were launched.

As work for most of the projects had not even started, the members were not satisfied with the minister’s response.

“We may meet the Chief Minister soon,” Mr. Thiagarajan said.

Youth who lost leg in Thoothukudi firing to get artificial limb, government job



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOOTHUKUDI, JULY 02, 2018 00:00 IST

After more than a month-long treatment at the Government Medical College Hospital here, the State Government has decided to rehabilitate the youth, who lost his right leg in the police firing during the anti-Sterlite protest here on May 22 last, by fitting an artificial limb.

“We’ve decided to take G. Princeton along with his attendants to Chennai on Monday (July 2) for fitting the artificial limb. Moreover, he will also be given a government job as assured by the Chief Minister,” Minister for Information and Public Relations ‘Kadambur’ C. Raju told reporters after visiting him at Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital on Saturday along with Collector Sandeep Nanduri.

Mr. Princeton of Terespuram, a diploma-holder in mechanical engineering, who was working as ‘process operator’ in a titanium-di-oxide manufacturing unit in SIPCOT Industrial Estate, suffered bullet injury on the right leg on May 22. He was reportedly on his way to work when he was caught in the anti-Sterlite agitation.

The badly damaged leg has been amputated and he is still undergoing treatment in the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital.

“The officials have made all the arrangements to shift Mr. Princeton to Chennai,” Mr. Raju said

COPPER SMELTER

Can't reopen plant, can assure jobs, Raju tells Sterlite's ex-staff

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Thoothukudi

THE Sterlite Copper plant in Thoothukudi cannot be reopened, Minister for Information & Publicity Kadambur C Raju said on Sunday. Meeting former staff of the plant near Kovilpatti, the minister said the plant's closure was a policy decision of the State government. However, he assured those who had lost their jobs that the government had taken steps to make alternate arrangements. The minister said the plant's former employees would be given preference for jobs in government projects.

Representatives of the Sterlite All Contractors Development Association and of Sterlite contract labourers had met the minister at his residence at Chidambara-puram and submitted petitions urging the government to reopen the plant. They were joined by former employees of the plant. They claimed their livelihood was at stake and alleged the plant had been closed due to a fake campaign by anti-social forces.

Raju categorically stated that the plant could not be reopened. "As many as 12,000 employees are affected directly and indirectly due to the closure... these people will be given priority in future government projects such as the establishment of Madurai-Thoothukudi Industrial Corridor, the seawater desalination plant and shipbuilding yard," he said. Residents of Thoothukudi have campaigned for closure of the plant for over 20 years charging Sterlite of polluting the environment. On May 22, an anti-Sterlite rally ended with police opening fire on protesters, killing 13. The government had since issued an order to seal the plant.



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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Sterlite staff petition info minister

TNN | Jul 2, 2018, 12.30 AM IST

Madurai: A group of contract employees with the now defunct Sterlite copper smelter in Tuticorin petitioned state Information and Publicity Minister Kadambur C Raju on Sunday asking him to take steps to reopen the plant or provide them with alternative employment.

According to petitioners, Minister has promised them that their concerns will be addressed and that the government would take steps to provide alternate employment at the earliest. A group of about 50 persons, contractors and contract employees of Sterlite, approached the minister in Tuticorin saying that their livelihood has been affected since the plant shut down. "It's been more than a month since the plant was closed. We all have been without work since," Ponraj, former panchayat president of Therku Veerapandipuram said. TNN

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TAMIL NADU

Why not a CBI probe into firing, asks CJ

JULY 03, 2018 00:00 IST

Stating that lawyers in Madurai had made a general request, to her, not to take away cases filed in the Bench, she said: “I told them that no more cases will be taken away from Madurai. What is here is here and what is there is there.” She added that the protesters who indulged in violence during the Thoothukudi protests and the police and government officials who violated the law must be dealt with in accordance with law.

SP’s counter-affidavit

In the counter-affidavit, Thoothukudi Superintendent of Police Murali Rambha rejected the plea of the one of the petitioners to register a case of murder against the policemen who opened fire. “Police officials have acted pursuant to lawful orders issued by the competent authority. Moreover, for having acted in good faith in order to uphold public order, a police official or revenue official cannot be charged with the offence of murder,” he said.

Accusing the protesters of having caused damage to 331 properties worth about Rs. 15.67 crore apart from damage to the tune of Rs. 28.12 lakh caused to the properties in the Collectorate and other government offices on May 22, the SP stated that the rioters attempted to kill policemen and continued to indulge in violence despite repeated persuasions, warnings, lathi charge and opening of tear gas. He said the police opened fire only as a last resort.

It was also claimed that the necessity to use firearms arose only to save the lives of policemen and the family members of Sterlite employees. The SP contended that there was no necessity for a separate probe into the incident since the State government had already constituted a Commission of Inquiry headed by Justice Aruna Jagadeesan, a retired judge of the High Court. Besides, the human rights commissions as well as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commissions were also conducting an inquiry into the incident.

Vedanta set to delist from LSE

Vidya Ram

LONDON, JULY 03, 2018 00:00 IST

Vedanta Resources is set to delist from the London Stock Exchange after the family trust of Anil Agarwal agreed to buy the remaining 33.47% minority stake in the company, valuing the firm at £2.325 billion.

While the company sought to portray the development as a ‘natural progression,’ the move follows events at its group firm Sterlite Copper in Thoothukudi and calls from campaigners and Britain’s Labour Party for the company to be delisted. In May, protests in Thoothukudi, demanding the permanent closure of Sterlite smelter, led to police firing, resulting in several deaths

TAMIL NADU

Sterlite ban, a cat on the wall: Vaiko

STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JULY 03, 2018 00:00 IST

Again raises doubt if closure of plant would stand legal scrutiny

MDMK general secretary Vaiko on Monday once again asked if the government's seal and closure order on the Sterlite plant would stand legal scrutiny.

Recalling the time when the Sterlite plant was ordered to be closed earlier in relation to a case he had filed, he said that he had cited less space for the green belt as one of the reasons, and that it was located too close to the city.

“Even then, the company managed to get the ban quashed by the Supreme Court. Now, they say it's a policy decision of the government because the industry violated the Pollution Control Board's norms. Will this stand in court?” he asked. “This ban is only a cat on the wall,” he added.

‘People want peace’

Speaking to reporters in Thoothukudi before appearing in a judicial magistrate court in connection with a case filed in 2009 for staging a black-flag protest during the visit of the then External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee in support of Sri Lankan Tamils, he said the Thoothukudi people had always wanted peace.

He said he didn't want to “blame anyone” for the Thoothukudi violence. The police should stop harassing the people by slapping more cases, he added.

Mr. Vaiko added that the Supreme Court had “betrayed” the interests of the State by allocating 14.75 tmcft of water for Bengaluru. “But, Karnataka is feeling short-changed and challenging the order, while Tamil Nadu is holding victory celebrations,” he said. As many as 169 people were named in the case when the party members staged a demonstration in support of Sri Lankan Tamils then.

'Why no CBI probe into Thoothukudi firing?'

Apart from CB-CID, a one-man commission by Justice Aruna Jagadeesan is seized of the issue

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Chennai

WHY can't the Thoothukudi firing case be transferred to the CBI, the first bench of the Madras High Court has queried.

The bench of Chief Justice Indira Banerjee and Justice P T Asha made the observation when the batch of PILs came up before the bench on Monday.

The PILs sought a court-monitored CBI probe into the May 22 and 23 firing, in which 13 anti-Sterlite protestors were killed.

Murali Rambha, Thoothukudi SP, in her 11-page counter-affidavit, claimed that the investigation by the CB-CID was going on in a fair and impartial manner. There is no necessity to transfer the case to the CBI, the SP said.

The Supreme Court has, time and again, emphasised that courts must self-impose limitations while considering such

pleas for CBI inquiry.

"Apart from the CB-CID probe, a one-man commission by former High Court judge Justice Aruna Jagadeesan is seized of the issue. The SHRC, NHRC, and SC/ST Commission are also probing the case," the SP pointed out.

Referring to another prayer to book revenue officials under section 302 (murder) of the IPC, the officer said that the relief is unsustainable. The police officials and revenue officials acted pursuant to the lawful orders issued by the competent authority. For having acted in good faith for upholding public order, a police official or revenue official cannot be charged with the offence of murder, the officer added. As far as compensating the families of the deceased, the state government initially announced ₹10 lakh for the kin of the deceased, ₹3 lakh for seriously injured and ₹1 lakh for minor injuries.

Carry out day-to-day duties as usual, coops told

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

THE first bench of the Madras High Court has directed co-operative societies in the State to carry on their day-to-day functions as usual.

The status quo already granted by the court in connection with three phases of election conducted to the societies will not stand in the way of carrying out the day-to-day functions of such societies, the bench of Chief Justice Indira Banerjee and Justice P T Asha clarified on Monday.

The bench made the clarification after concluding the final hearing of over 400 petitions alleging irregularities in the elections and posted the matter to July 7 for further hearing.

The petitioners as well as the authorities concerned shall file their respective written arguments before that.

A division bench of the Madurai High Court on April 9 ordered status quo on the elections conducted in phases II, III and IV to a section of societies. Subsequently, since both benches were flooded with similar petitions, all pleas were tagged together before the first bench, here. The TN State Co-operatives Election Commission on March 5 last announced elections to 18,775 societies, including 18,435 primary co-operative societies that come under the State's 15 departments.

The commission decided to hold a four-phase election to the primary co-operative societies.



'All chemicals, raw materials to be evacuated from Sterlite in 30 days'

Collector says high-powered technical committee inspected plant, given nod for evacuation

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Thoothukudi

ALL the chemical substance and the raw materials stocked at the Sterlite Copper premises would be evacuated by the district administration in next 30 days, said Collector Sandeep Nanduri here on Monday.

In a press brief after the weekly grievance redress meeting held at the collectorate, Nanduri said that the high-powered technical committee formed by the State government had inspected the plant and given nod to evacuate all the chemicals.

The chemicals such as sulphuric acid, phosphoric acid, gypsum, high speed diesel and other materials are stocked at the unit premises.

The district administration would immediately take steps to remove all the acids within 30 days complying to the necessary safety measures as instructed by the high-powered technical committee.

As per the recommendations of the committee, a district level committee under the collector comprising corporation commissioner, officials belong to the departments of revenue, police, pollution control board, fire and safety, and industry safety had been formed to evacuate the chemicals, the collector said.

As gypsum is mounted in large quantity, it may take extra time, he said and added that due to the absence of electric supply, diesel generators would be routed in for the evacuation process.

The district administration had already evacuated 2000 tonnes of sulphuric acid from the Sterlite Copper premises.

On Monday, over six tankers of sulphuric acid too were dispatched to the companies concerned, a source said.

Govt trying to save cops who fired in Thoothukudi, charges Vaiko

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Thoothukudi

THE State government is trying to safeguard the policemen who opened fire and killed 13 civilians during the anti-Sterlite protest, said MDMK General Secretary Vaiko, at Thoothukudi, on Monday.

Vaiko appeared before a Judicial Magistrate in connection with the case of waving a black flag in 2009, against the then Union minister Pranab Mukherjee who later became the President of India.

Speaking to reporters, Vaiko said that the anti-Sterlite pro-

test has not been a success as the state government continues to remain a cat on the wall.

He declined the order for closure as an outcome of policy decision of the state government, and said that the copper smelter has been closed based on the order of the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB), which can be stayed legally.

If it is a policy decision, then the state government should have submitted proper evidences like breaching green belt norms and the laws governing the Gulf of Mannar Marine Park, he added.

Vaiko reiterated that Thoothukudi residents were protesting in a non-violent way, but that the government officials failed to handle the spirit of protest. They could have done so through a dialogue or detention, he felt.

Vaiko termed the police firing as "determined pre-meditated cold-blooded murder". IPC Section 302 should have been invoked against the police responsible for the life loss, he said. "Since no police personnel has been booked for murder so far, it is apparent that the government is trying to safeguard the killer cops," he added.

Dissent crops up among protesters

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Thoothukudi

ANOTHER section of anti-Sterlite protesters from Madathur filed a petition at the District Legal Services Authority, distancing themselves from the outfit Makkal Athikaram and claiming that the members of the outfit were responsible for the violence. The residents also sought legal aid so as to protect themselves from police arrests.

This is the second attempt by a group of people who sought to distance themselves from Makkal Athikaram, an outfit that is believed to be the backbone of the protest against Sterlite Copper.

The Madathur residents headed by anti-Sterlite agitation leader Pon Pandi said in the petition that their protest started on April 4, 2018, was peaceful. They ensured there was no violence during their rally to Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) on April 23, they said. When the district administration called on the agitation leaders from their village on May 20, they

even agreed to shift the protest venue to SAV Ground, their petition said.

However, the members of Makkal Athikaram convinced them to change their mind and to support them in laying siege to the Collectorate, the residents claimed. Advocates Hariraghavan and Thanga Pandian also took them to various fishing hamlets and other places to canvas among the public, asking them to participate only in laying siege to the Collectorate and to spread the information on social media, the petitioners said in the petition. The petition further said that it was Makkal Athikaram that led the people towards violence.



The members of Makkal Athikaram convinced us to change our mind and to support them in laying siege to the Collectorate

Madathur residents



Why not CBI probe T'kudi firing: HC

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JULY 2

The Madras high court has directed the police to produce all documents relating to the May 22 police shooting at Thoothukudi. The court wanted to know why the investigation should not be transferred to the CBI.

While hearing pleas seeking court monitored probe in the police firing, in which 13 persons were killed and several others injured, on Monday, first



bench of Chief Justice Indira Banerjee and Justice P T Asha observed that why cannot CBI con-

duct the probe.

Challenging the plea, Thoothukudi district superintendent of police Murali Rambha filed a 11-page counter affidavit claiming that the investigation in the hands of the CB-CID and probe is going on in a fair and impartial manner. Hence there is no necessity to transfer the probe to CBI.

Besides, the CB-CID probe, a one-man commission of enquiry by former high court judge Justice Aruna Jagadeesan is seized

of the issue. In addition to this National Human Rights Commission, State Human Rights Commission and SC/ST Commission are also probing the matter.

The SP said the police officers and revenue officials acted pursuant to the lawful orders issued by the competent authority.

They had acted in good faith for upholding public order. Hence police or revenue official cannot be charged with the offence of murder. ■ P4

■ Makkal Adhikaram role in Sterlite stir under scrutiny

'Fringe group's siege plan was unilaterally decided'

M. ARULOLI | DC
TIRUNELVELI, JULY 2

In a sensational disclosure, coastal hamlets farmers and traders from Madathur in Thoothukudi have now virtually endorsed the local fishermen's apprehension that a Tamil fringe group had "hijacked an essentially peaceful movement" against Sterlite copper on May 22 last, leading to the violence and brutal police firing here that day.

Around 150 men and women from Madathur village presented a petition to the Thoothukudi district legal services authority, seeking legal help for them against police action, as cases have been registered ag-

inst around 40 of the villagers for their participation in the May 22 rally that turned violent to claim 13 lives in police firing and injuring more than 100.

The village head of Madathur, Pon Pandian charged that, Vanchinathan of 'Makkal Adhikaram', without consulting the village heads, had unilaterally declared the collectorate siege plan.

"We were not aware that advocates, Vanchinathan, Hariragavan and Thangapandian belonged to 'Makkal Adhikaram' as they came to our village only on the last few days of our peaceful struggle against Sterlite," said Pon Pandian, who partic-

ipated in the peace talk convened by the district and the police administration on May 20 as the representative of Madathur village. "We along with some other villages like Pandarampatti, Silverpuram, Therkkuverappanndipuram had decided to participate in the peaceful protest at the SAV ground allotted by the district administration."

"The same evening (May 20), advocates like Vanchinathan and Hariragavan organised a meeting at Pandarampatti village, spoke ill of the village heads for participating in the peace talk and agreed to hold a peaceful protest on May 22," said Pon Pandian, who too

added that he along with many others were removed unanimously from the 'Anti-Sterlite Federation' formed by the villages.

The secretary of the District Legal services Authority, Samuel receiving the petition from the Madathur villagers, promised to forward it to the Madras High court. The villagers too were promised free legal aid to handle the cases registered against them.

It is to be noted that the representatives of fishermen community last week had made a complaint that 'Makkal Adhikaram' cadres brain washed some of the fishermen youths to indulge in violence on May 22.

Sterlite moves NGT against closure order

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, JULY 04, 2018 00:00 IST

'Declare order sealing the plant illegal exercise of power'

Sterlite Copper on Tuesday said it has filed an appeal before the National Green Tribunal (NGT), New Delhi, challenging the orders passed by the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board directing the closure of its copper smelter unit at Thoothukudi in the State.

In a brief statement, the company said it had also sought the NGT's permission to allow it to carry out "care and maintenance of the plant and other interim reliefs", during the pendency of the appeal.

It is learnt that in the petition, Vedanta Ltd, the parent company of Sterlite Copper, has sought a direction to restrain the Tamil Nadu government from preventing or interfering with the functioning and operations of the company in any manner. It prayed to declare as unlawful and illegal the exercise of powers by the State government in passing an order closing and sealing the copper smelter unit under the Water Act.

In another prayer, the company urged the tribunal to direct the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board to consider Vedanta's applications for renewal of consent afresh and pass appropriate orders within one month, granting the consent letter for a period of five years.

Vedanta sought permission to operate the copper smelter pending consideration of its appeal.

It further sought a direction to the TNPCB and Tangedco to restore and provide minimum power supply, water and manpower access for safeguarding the emergency systems of the plant.

The company said the factory housed various chemicals, resins and fuels and that the sudden closure of the plant posed a threat to the surroundings and the plant and machinery.

TAMIL NADU

No organisation infiltrated anti-Sterlite protests: VCK



STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JULY 04, 2018 00:00 IST

'It is not possible to brainwash one lakh people'

Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi president Thol. Thirumavalavan on Tuesday denied allegations that certain organisations had infiltrated the anti-Sterlite

659

protests, and said “it is not possible to ‘brainwash’ one lakh people”. It may be recalled that sections of residents of Threspuram and Madathur distanced themselves from the members of Makkal Adhigaram who, they said, had instigated the violence.

Speaking to reporters here before taking part in a condolence meeting organised by the VCK for the 13 people who were killed in police firing, Mr. Thirumavalavan said such rumours were being spread by the Sterlite management and the police. The meeting was held here following the permission granted by the Madurai Bench of the Madras High.

Further, Mr. Thirumavalavan said the State and Central governments were trying to impose the Chennai-Salem eight-lane highway project on the people. “The State government should take the consent of the people before any such project is taken up,” he said.

He also said the red tape in providing community certificates for the SC/ST community people should be done away with. “The post-matric scholarships for Dalit students has been stopped by the State government, as a result of which enrolment of students from the community in private colleges has come down,” he added.

Speaking about the proposed shifting of Dr. Ambedkar Government Law College campus at Parry’s Corner in Chennai to Tiruvallur and Kanchipuram, he said, “The college may be expanded, but the old campus should stay. If there are space constraints, the student strength of the college should be reduced.”

The VCK leader also said loan waivers should be extended to people from the SC/ST communities, who had taken loans from Tamil Nadu Adi Dravidar Housing and Development Corporation to set up small businesses.

TAMIL NADU

More infrastructure for villages near Sterlite plant



STAFF REPORTER

THOOTHUKUDI, JULY 04, 2018 00:00 IST

'Various development projects will be completed soon'

Thoothukudi Collector Sandeep Nanduri interacted with residents of villages in the vicinity of the Sterlite plant at Pudhiamputhur on Tuesday.

Residents of Kumarettiyapuram, Pudhiamputhur, Saminatham, South Veerapandiyapuram, Jambulingapuram and Sillanatham participated in the session, which was held at a marriage hall in the area.

He said that a committee under his purview, including the Revenue Divisional Officer(RDO), Project Director of District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), officials from the Animal Husbandry Department and doctors, have been directly interacting with the people in the villages to understand their problems.

Based on their interaction, Mr. Nanduri said that project reports for laying roads, canals, water pipelines and desilting of rivers have been drawn up. He said that as various departments have enough funds, the projects would be completed soon.

He also inspected a nearby anganwadi centre and repair work being done for restoring a pipeline damaged by the construction of a bridge near Sillanatham.

Project Director of DRDA Dhanapathi and Kovilpatti RDO J. Vijaya were present.

Collector-led panel to inspect villages around Sterlite, to look into region's development

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Thoothukudi

THE district administration has formed a special committee to address the grievances at 15 villages surrounding the Sterlite Copper unit, said District Collector Sandeep Nanduri.

Nanduri chaired an interaction session with the villagers at Puthiyampudur, located adjacent to South Veerapandiapuram, where Sterlite Copper functioned. Over 50 persons from Puthiyampudur, South Veerapandiapuram, A Kumareddiapuram, Saminatham, Sambulingapuram and Sillanatham participated in the session.

15 villages surrounding the copper smelter plant to be visited

During the meeting on Tuesday, the villagers raised concerns about the contamination of groundwater which has become unfit for domestic use and to be given to cattle. They also wanted relaying of the potholed roads and drainages and installation of street lights.

When women asked about the illegal detention of their relatives, the Collector replied that he had instructed that those have no connection with the violence should be released.

Speaking to the reporters, Nanduri said that a special committee including the sub-collector, the project director of DRDA, animal husbandry and other con-



Collector Sandeep Nanduri (centre), Kovilpatti RDO J Vijaya (left) and other officials hearing the grievances of public at Puthiyampudur on Tuesday | Express

cerned officials, has been formed to address the grievances of the public in the villages surrounding Sterlite Copper. He mentioned that the committee would be headed by him.

"The committee will inspect the village and inquire about the basic needs for the village so as to bring about 100 per cent development. It has already begun the work and estimation of required projects are going on," the collector said.



The committee will inspect the villages and inquire about the basic needs for the people so as to bring about 100 per cent development. The work and estimation of required projects are going on

Sandeep Nanduri, Collector

Lawyer's petition against 'police harassment' dismissed

Madurai: The Madurai Bench of Madras High Court dismissed a 'not to harass' petition filed by a Thoothukudi-based advocate against the district police for allegedly harassing him and his family in the 'pretext' of probing into the violence during the anti-Sterlite protest. The petitioner, T Jegadeesan, an advocate belonging to Ottapidaram in the district submitted that he was being called for interrogation by the police without following any due procedures. "The police frequently visited my house and harassed me and my family and also threatened to register false cases against me," he said seeking the court's direction to the police to stop harassing him. However, Additional Advocate General K Chellapandian, appearing for the police, denied the allegations saying that the police did not indulge in any such harassment. On hearing the submissions, Justice D Krishnakumar recorded the undertaking given by the AAG that there was no harassment against the petitioner. Directing the petitioner to seek remedy before an appropriate forum, he dismissed the petition.

Earlier, Nanduri inspected the Anganwadi, an overhead bridge at Puthiyampudur, and the repairing of drinking water pipelines at Sillanatham. He also planted 150 saplings at the VOC Boys Higher Secondary School in Ottapidaram.

DRDA PD Dhanapathi, Kovilpatti RDO J Vijaya, Ottapidaram tahsildar Johnson Devasahayam, BDO Isakiappan and other officials were present during the Collector's visit.



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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Collector vows steps to provide basic amenities to villages near Sterlite plant

TNN | Jul 4, 2018, 05.49 AM IST



MADURAI: Following the closure of Sterlite and efforts to clear the acids, chemicals, gases and other components from the copper plant, the Tuticorin district administration has now started taking steps to provide basic amenities to villages around it. For years, these villagers have been demanding basic amenities, especially clean drinking water.

“There are 13 to 15 villages around Sterlite. We have formed a district-level committee headed by the collector and comprising the sub collector, project director of the district rural development agency, doctors and officials from the animal husbandry to visit these villages individually and study their requirements,” collector Sandeep Nanduri said. He was addressing reporters after interacting with villagers of Puthiamputhur,

Therku Veerapandiapuram and A.Kumarettiyapuram at a marriage hall in Puthiamputhur. During the meeting held on Monday, people listed out their long-pending demands.

“We want to provide 100 per cent development. The officials will continue their visits and study their requirements and submit an estimate based on which the works will be carried out under various schemes,” he said. After the meeting, he said that key requirements of people were water facilities, proper roads, drainage and desilting of water bodies. Nanduri said that the district administration had adequate funds to execute the development works. An important grievance of villagers was the arrest of youth on the pretext of detaining the mob that was engaged in violence at Tuticorin on the 100th day of the anti-Sterlite protest on May 22. The collector said that details of the arrests will be discussed with the superintendent of police of the district. “We will discuss the cases registered against the persons and why they were arrested. If they can be released, efforts will be taken

for that as well,” he added.

On the second phase of evacuation of acids and other components from Sterlite premises that began on Monday, the collector said that 10 tankers carried sulphuric acid and phosphoric acid from the plant on the first day. “Evacuation of other chemicals, gases and the other components has started today (Tuesday),” he said. Since there is no power supply to Sterlite after it was sealed, three diesel generator sets with a capacity of 500 kilowatt each have been mobilised to facilitate the evacuation process. “The entire evacuation is done under the supervision of senior officials,” he added.

Cops raid house, office of advocate Vanchinathan

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Madurai

THE Thoothukudi police carried out a raid at the house and office of advocate Vanchinathan, who was arrested on charges of instigating violence during protests on May 22 in Thoothukudi against the expansion of a copper smelter.

As many as 13 people were killed in police firing in May after the agitation took a violent turn. The copper plant has since been ordered to be shut.

Advocate Vanchinathan, state coordinator of People's Right Protection Centre, was arrested by the Thoothukudi police from Chennai's airport.

The Thoothukudi police had booked cases against him under Sections 147 (punishment for ri-

oting), 148 (rioting, armed with deadly weapon), 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) and 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code and Section 3 of the Tamil Nadu Public Property (Prevention of Damage and Loss) Act, 1992.

Following advocate Vanchinathan's arrest, the police team, led by Inspector Suresh, reached his home and office in KK Nagar in the city and carried out a raid.

During the raid, the police team said that they recovered a few properties, including some photos and pamphlets. The inspection lasted for over 30 minutes.



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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Tuticorin villagers accuse Left outfit of inciting violence

PTI | Jul 5, 2018, 05.09 PM IST



TUTICORIN: Over a month after the unbridled violence during an anti-Sterlite protest here that claimed 13 lives, some locals involved in the incidents have claimed they were "brainwashed" by a Left outfit to picket the district collectorate.

Hundreds of protesters had gone on the rampage on May 22, storming the collectorate, setting buildings and vehicles ablaze, and prompting police action that triggered outrage and forced the Tamil Nadu government to close the copper smelter unit.

The outfit--Makkal Adhikaram-- has, however, rejected the allegation.

On May 22, after the district collectorate was picketed to seek closure of the copper plant of Sterlite, a unit of the Vedanata group, over pollution concerns, large-scale violence had followed. In the consequent police firing, 13 people were killed on May 22 and 23.

Blaming Makkal Adhikaram (People's Power) for the picketing of the district collectorate, Madathur villagers in Tuticorin district accused the outfit and its allied organisations of "changing their hearts".

In a petition to the District Legal Services Authority on July 2, the villagers sought legal help apprehending that several residents may be arrested in connection with the violence.

The villagers said in their petition they had assured the district authorities at a peace meeting on May 20 that they would hold a

peaceful demonstration at SAV grounds on May 22 to "draw the attention of the government" to the alleged pollution caused by the unit.

However, two advocates and their associates "who belong to Makkal Adikaram changed our hearts" in favour of besieging the district collectorate, they claimed.

The two lawyers are now claiming they had nothing to do with the protest, the villagers said, adding it has caused "fear" among them.

"We request (the authorities) to avoid linking us with Makkal Adhikaram," they said in their petition, and sought legal support to avert "police trouble" and lead a peaceful life.

When asked why the petition was filed long after the violent incidents, D Pon Pandi, the main signatory to the petition and a Madathur resident told PTI, "I have about 40 cases registered against me. We, the Madathur villagers, have got nothing to do with the violence. That is why we have sought legal help."

He said people were apprehensive of arrest soon after the conclusion of a local temple festival.

Like the villagers of Madathur, several fishermen of Threspuram, a coastal neighbourhood, have accused the outfit of fomenting trouble, in their petition to the DLSA.

They too accused two advocates of Makkal Adhikaram of "intruding" into the village and announcing protests like the one against the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board on April 23.

"They brainwashed the youths. It is an undeniable fact that they engaged in propaganda seeking participation in the May 22 'siege the district collectorate' protest."

They said there are ample audio, video evidence of the Makkal Adhikaram advocates "whipping up passions" in support of the stir for the closure of the Sterlite unit.

They claimed they too had assured the authorities that their protest will be peaceful.

After the violence during which public and private property worth several crores of rupees were damaged, the Tuticorin police registered over 200 cases and arrested more than 100 people many of whom later got bail.

Advocate Vanchinathan, accused of leading the protest that turned violent, was arrested last month. A case was also registered against another advocate Hari Raghavan.

Makkal Adhikaram coordinator C Raju, however, claimed the villagers had submitted the petitions under "police intimidation". He said the content of the pleas was "slanderous".

Asserting that people from all walks of life protested against the plant, he asked "From where the claim of brainwash has come?"

Raju asserted that none of the outfit's workers was involved in the violence.

Alleging that police was on a "witch-hunt" for its cadres, he said six of them have already been arrested under the National Security Act. He denied that the two advocates named in the petitions belonged to his outfit.

"Why the advocates and the outfit have been named now, more than 40 days after the violence," asked advocate, Subbu Muthuramalingam, who appeared for Vanchinathan in a court here a few days ago, insisting "there are some suspicions".

Left activist R Jawahar said, "It is wrong to say that the protest on May 22 was organised by a single outfit."

Jawahar, who has authored books on the Left movement, said he suspected that those who submitted the petitions may have been asked to do so by "vested interests".

On the claims and counter claims, a top Tuticorin district police official said each and every relevant aspect was being investigated. "Probe is on. The focus is only on those who indulged in violence. Law will take its own course," he said.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Sterlite stir: House of arrested advocate Vanchinathan searched

TNN | Jul 5, 2018, 12.45 AM IST

Madurai: The house belonging to arrested advocate Vanchinathan in KK Nagar in Madurai city was searched by a police team from Tuticorin on Wednesday. The team was led by inspector Suresh. The lawyer was arrested recently on the charges of instigating the anti-Sterlite protest in May this year, resulting in the killing of 13 people in the police firing.

Vanchinathan is the state coordinator of the People's Right Protection Centre. He was arrested on June 20 at Chennai airport when he arrived from Delhi. The police team which reached the office first in the morning conducted the search for at least 30 minutes. Then they went to his house and conducted search after showing the court order. They left after seizing a few documents including photos and pamphlets.

He was booked under various charges of IPC including rioting with dangerous weapons, assault of criminal force in deterring public servant from discharging duty and Tamil Nadu public property (prevention damage and loss) act, 1992. Another lawyer, K Hariragavan was also recently arrested on the same charges.

TAMIL NADU

Advocate Vanchinathan gets bail

STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, JULY 06, 2018 00:00 IST

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court granted bail to advocate Vanchinathan, who was arrested by the police on the charge of spearheading the anti-Sterlite protests.

Justice G. R. Swaminathan while granting bail directed him to stay in Madurai till a final order was made in the case.

The court also restrained him from addressing anything related to the anti-Sterlite protests.

Vanchinathan should appear before the respondent police whenever summoned, the court said.

The court taking into cognisance that he was implicated in as many as nine cases, said that the bail would apply even if he was implicated in further cases, subsequent to the court's direction.

Vanchinathan, in his petition, said that he took part in the agitations against Sterlite Copper as a human rights activist.

He said that he was only offering legal aid to the people of Thoothukudi and was not involved in any violent activities during the protests as alleged by the prosecution.

The Thoothukudi police had booked cases against him under Sections 147 (punishment for rioting), 148 (rioting, armed with deadly weapon), 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) and 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code and Section 3 of the Tamil Nadu Public Property (Prevention of Damage and Loss) Act, 1992.

TAMIL NADU

HC seeks counter from State

STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, JULY 06, 2018 00:00 IST

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Thursday told the State that it had taken cognisance of the visuals of Thoothukudi riots, including that of a policeman taking aim from atop a police van.

A division bench of Justices C. T. Selvam and A. M. Basheer Ahamed made the observation while hearing the habeas corpus petitions filed seeking the production of advocate Vanchinathan and two others before the court. The court sought a counter from the State in the case.

Senior counsel N. R. Elango, representing the petitioners, told the court that his clients were implicated in multiple cases. He alleged that complaints against them were multiplied and fabricated.

The case has been adjourned for further hearing on July 11.

TAMIL NADU

Prohibitory order copy submitted to HC



STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, JULY 06, 2018 00:00 IST

Collector promulgated the order based on a petition

The State submitted a copy of the prohibitory order imposed in parts of Thoothukudi under Section 144 of CrPC in May to the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Thursday. The order was passed by the Collector based on the representation given by Sterlite Copper following directions from the High Court Bench. The court had directed that prohibitory orders may be promulgated throughout the district in the interest of public order, peace and tranquillity.

The General Manager (Legal), Sterlite Copper, in his representation, said that inflammatory messages were being circulated on social media platforms against Sterlite which might lead to unrest and disturb peace and tranquillity in the area and endanger the safety of employees of the Sterlite plant. The company had sought prohibitory orders under Section 144 CrPC for a radius

of 500 metres around the plant and its residential quarters.

The order signed by the District Magistrate and Collector of Thoothukudi read “ with a view to maintain (sic) law and order and to avoid disturbance of public tranquillity..... promulgate an order under Section 144 CrPC in SIPCOT and Thoothukudi South Police Station limits prohibiting any public meeting or assembly of five or more persons or processions for a period from 2200 hrs on 21.05.2018 to 0800 hrs on 23.05.2018.” The order prohibited the entry of all types of vehicles carrying persons intending to participate in ‘Muttrugai Porattam’ on May 22 within the SIPCOT and Thoothukudi South police station limits.

However, the order did not apply to regular stage carriages, tourist vehicles plying to other places, goods carriages, vehicles carrying school and college students, essential commodities and regular omni buses. The order also did not apply to public gatherings taking place with the permission of competent police authorities, it read.

Advocate A. W. D. Tilak had filed the public interest litigation petition before the High Court Bench seeking a direction to the Thoothukudi Collector to produce the copy of the prohibitory order clamped in parts of Thoothukudi during the anti-Sterlite protest. A division bench of Justices C. T. Selvam and A. M. Basheer Ahamed adjourned the case to July 11 for further hearing.

Advocate Vanchinathan granted conditional bail

Court restricts him from involving in any anti-Sterlite activities

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Madurai

THE Madurai Bench of Madras High Court granted conditional bail to advocate Vanchinathan, who was arrested on charges of instigating violence on the 100th day of anti-Sterlite protest in Thoothukudi on May 22.

Petitioner S Vanchinathan, an advocate and State Coordinator of the People's Rights Protection Centre, was booked under Sections 147 (Punishment for rioting), 148 (Rioting, armed with deadly weapon), 188 (Disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), 353 (Assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) and 506 (Punishment for criminal intimidation) of the IPC in connection with his role in the anti-Sterlite protest in Thoothukudi.

In total, nine cases had been registered against him by

Thoothukudi police and he was later arrested on June 20 after the High Court Bench denied him anticipatory bail.

While Vanchinathan was in remand, he approached the Bench seeking bail, denying that his role was fabricated by the police in the FIR. Pointing out the flaws in the charges framed against him, he sought bail. Opposing it, AAG Chellapandian, on behalf of the police contending that if given bail, Vanchinathan may involve in more anti-Sterlite activities, which might lead to disruption of peace in Thoothukudi district.

Justice G R Swaminathan, hearing the arguments, granted bail to Vanchinathan, on certain conditions that he should not verbally or physically involve in any anti-Sterlite activities and should not leave Madurai. He must appear before police when summoned.

Terms applied

Police are permitted to register cases against Vanchinathan if required but cannot arrest him when he is out on bail. He also got bail in another case filed by Kodaikanal police in 2015

Will shops reopen in temple?

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Madurai

HEARING a petition filed by Sri Meenakshi Sundareswarar Koil Kadaikarargal Sangam, seeking a direction towards permitting the merchants who ran shops on the temple premises to reopen their shops, the Madurai Bench of Madras Court issued notice to the HR and CE department and adjourned the case to July 12.

The petitioner, I Rajunagulu, who is the president of the association, submitted that they were running the shops for many generations on the temple premises and were paying ₹2 lakh



Govt widens scope of inquiry into May-22 police firing

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

THE State government has widened the scope of inquiry of the commission headed by Justice Aruna Jagadeesan into the police firing at Thoothukudi on May 22 over the Sterlite issue. Orders in this regard were issued on July 4.

Originally, the panel was asked to inquire into the causes and circumstances leading to opening of fire resulting in the death and injuries to persons on May 22 at Thoothukudi, including damage to public and private property.

Now, the government has amended the above terms of reference empowering the commission to inquire into the subsequent events at Thoothukudi after the police firing and nearby areas, including damage to public and private property.

An official release said the general public and victims can furnish the facts and information known to them regarding the incident either directly or indirectly through authorised person or representative to the commission by July 27.



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Fri, 06 July 2018

epaper.newindianexpress.com/c/30235483



NGT refuses Sterlite access to plant

The company had sought restoration of power to the unit to carry out maintenance works

SV KRISHNA CHAITANYA @Chennai

THE National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Thursday refused to grant any interim relief to UK-based Vedanta Group company's Sterlite Industries Ltd, to restore power and give access to their personnel to carry out maintenance work in their copper smelting plant at Thoothukudi.

The tribunal was hearing an appeal of Sterlite seeking a stay on the closure order on its plant by the Ta-

mil Nadu Pollution Control Board and disconnection of power supply to the unit. Without going into the merits of case, the bench raised the question of maintainability of the application.

Rakesh Sharma, standing counsel for Tamil Nadu government, told Express, "We argued that Vedanta has filed petitions before different forums seeking similar prayers, in which case this application before NGT is not maintainable," he said.

On July 18, the next date of hearing, the bench will first decide on the maintainability of the application. "If the tribunal feels it is maintainable, Vedanta will press for interim relief, if not it will be dismissed. We were given 10 days time to file the counter," Sharma said.

In its applications, the company also requested the tribunal to direct TNPCB to restore and provide minimum power supply, water and manpower access for safeguarding the

emergency systems of the plant as it houses various chemicals, resins and fuels, which pose a threat to the surroundings and the plant.

In April, TNPCB rejected Sterlite's plea to renew the Consent to Operate saying the company didn't comply with the stipulated conditions following which the government issued a permanent closure order on May 28. In between, protests erupted in Thoothukudi in which 13 persons died in police firing.



T'kudi villagers accuse Left outfit of inciting violence

THOOTHUKUDI, JULY 5: Over a month after the unbridled violence during an anti-Sterlite protest here that claimed 13 lives, some locals involved in the incidents have claimed they were "brainwashed" by a Left outfit to picket the district collectorate.

Hundreds of protesters had gone on the rampage on May 22, storming the collectorate, setting buildings and vehicles ablaze, and prompting police action that triggered outrage and forced the Tamil Nadu government to close the copper smelter unit. The outfit — Makkal Adhikaram — has, however, rejected the allegation.

On May 22, after the district collectorate was picketed to seek closure of the copper plant of Sterlite, a unit of the Vedanata group, over pollution concerns, large-scale violence had followed. In the consequent police firing, 13 people were killed on May 22 and 23.

Blaming Makkal Adhikaram (People's Power) for the picketing of the district collectorate, Madathur villagers in



File photo of Thoothukudi violence.

Tuticorin district accused the outfit and its allied organisations of "changing their hearts".

In a petition to the District Legal Services Authority on July 2, the villagers sought legal help apprehending that several residents may be arrested in connection with the violence.

The villagers said in their petition they had assured the district authorities at a peace meeting on May 20 that they would hold a peaceful demonstration at SAV grounds on May 22 to "draw the attention of the government" to the alleged

pollution caused by the unit.

However, two advocates and their associates "who belong to Makkal Adhikaram changed our hearts" in favour of besieging the district collectorate, they claimed. The two lawyers are now claiming they had nothing to do with the protest, the villagers said, adding it has caused "fear" among them. "We request (the authorities) to avoid linking us with Makkal Adhikaram," they said in their petition, and sought legal support to avert "police trouble" and lead a peaceful life. — PTI

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Sterlite protests: Advocate gets conditional bail

tnn | Jul 6, 2018, 12.31 AM IST

Madurai: The Madurai bench of the Madras high court on Thursday granted conditional bail to advocate S Vanchinathan, who was arrested by the Tuticorin police on charges of engineering anti-Sterlite protests and instigating violence.

A special team of Tuticorin police had arrested Vanchinathan at the Chennai airport on June 18 after the court had dismissed his advance bail petition. He was returning from Delhi when he was rounded up by the police.

A practising advocate at the Madras high court's Madurai bench, Vanchinathan along with another advocate Hari Raghavan of Tuticorin were booked by the police under several sections of the IPC including 353 (criminal force to deter public servants from carrying out duty), 148 (rioting with deadly weapons) and section 3 of Tamil Nadu Property (Prevention of Damage and Loss) act. Both of them are district secretaries of Makkal Adhigaram in their respective regions.

Meanwhile, Vanchinathan moved the high court seeking bail claiming that there are several flaws in the charges framed against him.

Additional advocate general, K Chellapandian expressed strong opposition to the bail petition contending that if out on bail, Vanchinathan might indulge in anti-Sterlite activities and act in a way to disrupt the restored peace in Tuticorin.

After hearing the arguments, justice G R Swaminathan granted bail to the lawyer on certain conditions. The court directed the lawyer to not leave Madurai and also not indulge in anti-Sterlite speeches or writing while out on bail, but allowed him to share opinion on other causes he has taken up.

Justice Swaminathan also directed Vanchinathan to appear before police when summoned for inquiry.

TAMIL NADU

Advocate surrenders

STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, JULY 07, 2018 00:00 IST

Advocate K. Hariragavan, accused along with advocate Vanchinathan of leading the anti-Sterlite protest in Thoothukudi, surrendered before the Judicial Magistrate II here on Friday.

He was remanded in judicial custody till July 13.

Cases were booked against him under Sections 147 (punishment for rioting), 148 (rioting, armed with deadly weapon), 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) and 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code and Section 3 of the Tamil Nadu Public Property (Prevention of Damage and Loss) Act, 1992.

TAMIL NADU

Vaiko to implead himself in Sterlite Copper case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOOTHUKUDI, JULY 07, 2018 00:00 IST

Says protest against firm will continue irrespective of verdict

Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam general secretary Vaiko has said he would implead himself in the case against Sterlite Copper in the National Green Tribunal. Speaking to reporters here on Friday, Mr. Vaiko said the State government, which did not really want to close Sterlite Copper permanently, had sealed the company in a bid to escape the raging public angst after the killing of 13 persons in police firing.

Portal to facilitate jobs for former Sterlite staff

Over 1,100 permanent staff and 4k contract workers had lost job

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Thoothukudi

DISTRICT Collector Sandeep Nanduri conducted a meeting with stakeholders on providing employment opportunities for the Sterlite Copper workers who had abruptly lost their jobs following the permanent closure of the unit.

The state government shut down the copper smelter on May 28, following severe protests against the firm. Thirteen people were killed in police firing during the anti-Sterlite rally on May 22 and 23.

Over 1,100 permanent employees and 4,000 contract workers of Sterlite Copper had lost their jobs and were looking at a bleak future. The state government had also declined the demands of the contractors and the contract workers to reopen the unit.

Other firms affected

The closure of Sterlite Copper had affected the employees in the industries depending on Sterlite for their raw materials too. At least 29 industries, largely dependent on the acid by-products of Sterlite, have downed their shutters and over 10,500 employees are now without jobs

In this backdrop, the district administration has launched a web portal, www.thoothukudi.online enabling facilities to upload bio-data for former Sterlite employees and for differently-abled persons. Private companies and factories may access the uploaded resumes and pro-

vide job opportunities for them, said sources.

Nanduri also conducted a consultation meeting with the stakeholding department on facilitating job opportunities for the former Sterlite employees and for differently-abled persons. Representatives of 50 companies participated in it and submitted their requirements.

Sterlite was a leading copper manufacturer and employed highly qualified technical staff. The total salary of the employees was Rs 13 crore.

It may be noted that the employees in the industries depending on Sterlite for their raw materials had also lost their jobs. At least 29 industries, largely dependent on the acid by-products of Sterlite, have downed their shutters and over 10,500 employees are now without jobs, said the sources.

CASHEW-LADEN

THE NEW
INDIAN
EXPRESS

Sat, 07 July 2018

epaper.newindianexpress.com/c/30235965



Struggle against Sterlite plant will continue, says Vaiko

M. ARULOLI | DC
THOOTHUKUDI, JULY 6

The MDMK general secretary, Vaiko said that he would not give up his struggle against Sterlite copper, even if the cases pending with the court and the National Green Tribunal (NGT) go in favour of the company.

Speaking to media persons near Thoothukudi district court, where he appeared before the magistrate on Friday in an old black flags protest case against then External Affairs minister, Pranab Mukherjee during the latter's visit to Thoothukudi in 2009, Vaiko accused the Tamil Nadu government of working in connivance with the Vedanta group in the Sterlite issue.

"If the Tamil Nadu government really wants the permanent closure of the copper industry, why should its police foist cases and continue the arrest of anti-Sterlite protestors,"



questioned Vaiko.

He also expressed the apprehension the AIADMK government has been intimidating the people in this issue so that they may not come to the streets again if the plant is opened.

"However I will not give up. Even if the court ruling goes in favour of the company, I will mobilise the people against it," warned

the MDMK general secretary, adding, he would file a petition at the principal bench of the NGT in New Delhi seeking its permission to implead himself in the case filed by Sterlite pleading to stay the state government's closure order.

Criticising the government of "enacting a drama in connivance with Sterlite," Vaiko said that the case filed by the company against the government order at the NGT was the climax scene.

The MDMK general secretary, while entering the court had to face opposition from a few advocates of Naam Tamizhar Katchi, who shouted at Vaiko.

The latter's supporters, however, after the court hearing was over and after Vaiko left the court premises, smashed two young lawyers--Jegadeesh Ram and Vetri, who were reportedly in an inebriated state inside the district court premises.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Vaiko alleges deal between government, Sterlite to open plant

TNN | Jul 7, 2018, 05.58 AM IST

TUTICORIN: Alleging that the state government and Sterlite have entered into a secret pact that would facilitate the copper plant to resume operations, MDMK general secretary Vaiko said that what is happening before the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in Delhi is the climax of the drama staged by both parties.

Vaiko was addressing reporters in Tuticorin after appearing before a court in connection with a case where he had shown black flag to then President, Pranab Mukherjee during the latter's visit to Tamil Nadu. Vaiko said that he will be impleading himself in the Sterlite case when it is taken up before the tribunal on July 18. "I have got the petition ready and will be appearing," he said. Vaiko, who has been fighting against Sterlite admitted that the company is likely to get a favourable direction.

He claimed that the state government did not intend to permanently close the plant. "If it was the intention of the government, it would have passed a law in this connection as a policy decision. If the court directs the plant to be reopened, the government will blame the court saying it could do nothing but obey the court's direction," he said.

The MDMK leader said that the copper plant has not only caused cancer but also damaged the atmosphere badly even as it made profits to the tune of several crores of rupees. But for the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board's directive, the state government does not have any backing behind its decision to seal the plant.

According to him, this had given the confidence to the chairman of Vedanta Group – Sterlite's parent group, Anil Agarwal to say that the company will resume production in Tuticorin – despite the police firing that claimed 13 lives on May 22 and 23.

Firing by the police is to frighten protesters so that nobody would dare to raise their voice against Sterlite when it is reopened. "We will not fear the bullets. Even if Sterlite gets a favourable direction in the court we will mobilise the public and protest without resorting to violence," he said.

Stating that the NGT in Chennai does not have judges he also alleged that the Modi government at the Centre is planning to close all tribunals.

Meanwhile, minister for information and publicity Kadambur C Raju told reporters at Kovilpatti in Tuticorin district on Friday that Sterlite was closed on April 9 and that it was publicised to make people understand that there is no need for them to protest against a plant that has been closed.

“We explained to the people that they need not burden themselves by protesting despite the closure on April 9, but leaders like Vaiko spread false information among people and instilled fear in their minds,” he said and held them responsible for the protest on May 22. Raju also said that leaders like Vaiko should act responsibly.

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Sterlite: Advocate Hari Raghavan surrenders

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Madurai: Advocate Hari Raghavan of Tuticorin who was accused by the state of engineering anti-Sterlite protests and aiding in violence during the protests, surrendered before the judicial magistrate in Madurai on Friday.

Raghavan's surrender comes a day after the Madurai bench granted bail to another advocate S Vanchinathan. Both of them had sought anticipatory bail after they came under the police radar. After the high court bench dismissed their bail petition, a special team arrested Vanchinathan at the Chennai airport on June 18.

Meanwhile, Raghavan who was searched by the police surrendered before the magistrate. Raghavan practises at the district court in Tuticorin. He and Vanchinathan were booked by the police under several Sections of IPC including 353 (criminal force to deter public servants from carrying out duty), 148 (rioting with deadly weapons) and section 3 of Tamil Nadu Property (Prevention of Damage and Loss) Act. Both of them are district secretaries of Makkal Adhigaram in their respective regions.

Recently, fishermen from Threspuram in Tuticorin had submitted a petition before the District Legal Services Authority in Tuticorin and claimed that Makkal Adhigaram, particularly advocates Raghavan and Vanchinathan brainwashed youngsters of the fishermen community into marching towards the collectorate on May 22. Thirteen people were killed and more than a 100 suffered injuries as a result of police firing on May 22 and May 23.

Politicians like Vaiko stirred anti-Sterlite protests: Minister

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MINISTER for Information and Publicity Kadambur C Raju on Friday said that some politicians like MDMK general secretary Vaiko were responsible for the anti-Sterlite protests and the subsequent police firing on May 22 and 23 that claimed the lives of 13 persons.

The minister was talking to the media after participating in a prize distribution function held by the Nehru Yuvakendra, Kovilpatti SS Duraisamy Nadar- Mariammal college, and Swamy Vivekananda Yoga and Skating Club at Kovilpatti here.

Asked his reaction on the remarks of Vaiko that the State government has indirect relationship with Sterlite Copper, Raju said that he could not understand if Vaiko's comments were a joke or ridiculous.

The minister said that the MDMK leader had opposed the government order for the permanent closure of the Sterlite plant in Thoothukudi. "He is now un-

satisfied with the National Green Tribunal's (NGT) denial of permission to reopen the copper smelter only due to political vendetta," Raju said.

The minister said that the anti-Sterlite agitation intensified only due to the campaigns by politicians like Vaiko, who came up with misleading facts which created a panic among the residents. "No responsible leader will mislead the public. A politician should have social responsibility," he said.

He also mentioned the petitions of the fishermen's association representatives who alleged that they were misled by certain outfits during the protests.

Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami had accused DMK's Thoothukudi MLA Geetha Jeevan for kindling the anti-Sterlite protests in the Assembly. Moreover, the State government had also accused Makkal Athikaram, an outfit that is believed to have led the mass protest, and Naam Tamilar Katchi for mobilising the public for the rally against the company.

Verbal abusers not party workers: NTK

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THE advocates who verbally abused MDMK general secretary Vaiko at the Thoothukudi court complex are not from Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK), said Thada Chandrasekhar, the state coordinator of the party's advocates' wing. He said that the abusers were from actor Rajinikanth's fans club.

When Vaiko came to Thoothukudi court on Friday in connection with a case, three advocates had used unparliamentary words against him. One of them was caught by Vaiko's supporters who also thrashed him. After the incident, Vaiko, in a press meet held in Madurai, had said that he suspected that the advocates belonged to NTK.

Addressing press persons here on Saturday, Chandrasekhar rejected Vaiko's charges.

Talking about the police firing that happened on May 22 and 23 against the anti-Sterlite protesters, Chandrasekhar said that the NTK cadre did not involve in the protest under the party's banner. "They took part in the agitation as Thoothukudi residents. The rally took a violent turn only due to the police action. That was not instigated by anyone." He also condemned the police for their frequent raids in the houses of protesters.

'Govt should take valid action on Sterlite'

Thoothukudi: While talking to the media at the Thoothukudi court complex on Friday, Vaiko had accused the State government of not taking any valid action for Sterlite's permanent closure. He also criticised that NGT's stand on accepting the maintainability of the petition filed by the Sterlite Copper seeking to reopen the unit. "They refusal to accept the non-maintainability of the petition might be a leeway for giving an interim stay on the closure order," he said and recalled that the Supreme Court had in 2013 scrapped a High Court order on Sterlite's closure, after the company approached the apex court.

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