

MEDIA DOSSIER ON ENDOSULFAN ISSUE IN KERALA 2010-2023



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Year of publication : **July 2023**

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INTRODUCTION

Endosulfan, a highly toxic pesticide, has become a topic of burning discussion in India, particularly in Kerala during the 1990s after several media reports and stories of individuals suffering from hitherto unknown illness were widely reported from Kasaragod, Kerala. Many of these reports and field studies pointed to the fact that the illnesses were occurred as a consequence to exposure to endosulfan- an insecticide applied aerially on to the cashew plantations. During 1963-64, the Kerala Agriculture Department started planting cashew in Kasaragod district. In 1978, the Plantation Corporation of Kerala (PCK) took over the estate and endosulfan trials were started in 1977-1978. Endosulfan poisoning was first reported in the media in 1979 by Sri. Shree Padre, a farm journalist. Many health problems appeared to manifest among people and many other living species including domestic animals in the village.

Assessments and studies shed light to fact that many children were born with disabilities and chronic health problems. Peculiar and complex health implications and illness those were practically non-existent before the endosulfan aerial spraying was reported from Kasaragod. It include conditions such as congenital anomalies, mental retardation, physical deformities, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, hydrocephalus and psychiatric problems; different types of cancers, infertility, miscarriages, endometriosis and hormonal irregularities among women, reproductive and developmental disorders were reported from villages where endosulfan poured in. Rheumatic complaints, paralysis and skin disorders, respiratory diseases, frequent and persistent illness indicating possible immune systems disorders have been reported. The community struggle against aerial spraying began as early as 1980 and the demand towards banning endosulfan started in late 1990s. Following the protest, media reports and demands from the ground, several committees were constituted to investigate the issues. Various reports in the following years have pointed that endosulfan spraying has contributed to polluting water resources that community had been using for daily sustenance, polluted soil and environment, and consequently people and animals were also got affected.

The High court of Kerala banned endosulfan in Kerala in 2003. The Central Government withheld the sale and use in Kerala in 2005. Several local protests broke out in Kasaragod district demanding ban of endosulfan. This paved the way for bringing the issue to the state and national level. Later it has even reached international forums such as the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Review Committee of Stockholm Convention, which resulted in a global ban of endosulfan in 2011. The same year Honorable Supreme Court of India ordered a national ban on this toxic chemical. Meanwhile, the national human rights commission has ordered to pay compensation to the individuals who were harmed by endosulfan poisoning. The state Government of Kerala has announced a relief package to address the remedy for problem, has been providing pension, medical assistances, etc. However, many issues still remain unsolved, including identifying victims, their rehabilitation, disbursement of compensation, etc. This dossier is a collection of newspaper reports related to endosulfan issue in Kerala.

18 November 2010

● ENDOSULFAN ISSUE

12/11/10 NIE

'C D Mayee panel unlikely to make fresh findings'

Reema Narendran | ENS
T'Puram, November 11

What the study teams are going to find it difficult would be the resistance of the people to part with the information

WHILE Union Ministers Sharad Pawar and Jairam Ramesh have announced one expert committee each to study the effect of endosulfan in Kasargod, neither the affected people or the medical community is enthused by it.

The 'go-back' slogans have already started to reverberate across the region against Dr C D Mayee Committee to look into the endosulfan issue.

"It happened a long time ago and eliciting medical history is not easy. There are a number of problems such as epilepsy, menstrual disorders, psychiatric problems and abortions, about which people generally do not like to reveal to doctors or anyone. What we needed was a thorough epidemiological study which requires a lot of patience," said Dr Sripathy, a doctor from the affected village, who worked among the victims.

Starting from the studies by the NGOs Thanal and Centre for Science and Environment to those by the KAU, FIPPAT and NIOH, and the various government appointed Committees such as the Dr Achuthan Committee, the O P Dubey Committee and the C D Mayee Committee, the total number of studies have crossed 17.

Even the State Health Minister is learnt to have approached some research institute for the same.

What the study teams are going to find difficult would be the resistance

of the people to parting with the information. Thanal, when they first started visiting homes, was unable to find any problems initially. Puzzled, they split into two and started talking to men and women separately. That was when a whole lot of reproductive problems in both men and women came to the surface.

"Very delayed puberty, gynaecological problems in women, abortions, multiple periods for women - we were actually shocked by the magnitude. But all these problems have such a social stigma to it, that we were forced to submit a vague report, without giving details. It was not that we had done a vague study, but for the larger good of the people, we had to keep it secret," recalled R Sridhar, programme director of Thanal. This apart, there, it would be difficult to find pesticide residues nearly a decade after the pesticide was banned. Endosulfan is said to have a low half-life period in water and even the Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment which is currently monitoring the area does not expect to find any residues in water or blood.

"The residues of the chemical can now be found only in the clay or the

human tissues where it binds with fat. Here it can stay for years resulting in the creation of abnormalities," said Dr. Jose Decruz, the district medical officer. "Since we can't excise and study the fat cells as such, the only possible way is to check for the presence of fat in the first excreta (meconium) of the baby," suggested Dr. Jose Decruz.

This suggestion is now being seriously considered by the scientific community in the State, even though the hows and when still remains unanswered. "In the case of harsh chemicals, what we probably can do is see whether there are any beneficial effects after the ban," said Dr. Mohankumar, another doctor working in the area.

He admitted that the visible ill-effects of endosulfan are comparatively on a lesser scale now, especially in the case of asthma and skin diseases. Most of the children with severe physical abnormalities are above the age of 10. While there are many who say that the only possible study now is that of 'recovery after the ban', there are others like Sridhar, who say that a study now could be useful in the appointment of additional care-givers in the region and setting up of additional healthcare facilities for the victims.

THE HINDU

24 November 2010

Action committee for pesticide-free Kasaragod



TIME TO ACT: Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan chairs a meeting along with Ministers P.K. Sreemathy, Mullakkara Ratnakaran and Benoy Viswam to discuss the plight of Endosulfan victims at the Secretariat on Tuesday.

— PHOTO: S. MAHINSHA

Staff Reporter

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Endosulfan Action Committee, an umbrella organisation of 12 organisations working for relief and remediation of Endosulfan victims in Kasaragod district, has urged the government to provide Rs 10 lakh each to relatives of the deceased and to declare the border district as 'pesticide-free'.

At a press conference here on Tuesday, convener of the committee P. V. Sudhir Kumar said that the State government should kick off a pilot project in Kasaragod adopting a new mode of agriculture using bio-pesticides only.

The committee members had, earlier in the day, attended a conference of officials,

people's representatives and non-government organisations convened by the Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan to discuss the plight of victims and review relief measures.

The convener, while welcoming the comprehensive package announced by the Chief Minister, said that victims in Kasaragod were yet to get justice.

The organisation's demand — compensation of Rs.10 lakh and Rs.5,000 as family pension to the kin of the deceased — did not get priority in the meeting, he said.

The organisation has come out against the socio-economic and health survey, which was carried out in 11 panchayats in 48 hours. Mr. Sudhir Kumar said there are 8,000-9,000 victims.

Investigations into the said.

"The survey was unscientific, against democratic norms and was not transparent. It was done with only a few people," he said.

Mr. Sudhir Kumar said the unholy nexus between the agriculturists, agriculture scientists, companies, Plantation Corporation, officials and administration over the years was responsible for the misery in Kasaragod.

The Plantation Corporation, which holds 4,696 hectares of land, one third of the district, had been spraying pesticide on its land for over 24 years.

The organisation demanded that the leased land held by the Corporation be given to the victims.

Issues like detoxification of rivers in the area were raised at the meeting, but were not responded to.

24/11/10
The Hindu

The Indian EXPRESS

17 December 2010

INTERNATIONAL TU BODY URGES INDIA TO SUPPORT BAN ON ENDOSULFAN

Express News Service
T'Puram, December 16

THE International Union of Foodworkers (IUF), a global federation of trade unions, on Thursday urged India to support the ban on endosulfan.

Briefing the media after a three-day Asia-Pacific regional meeting of agricultural and plantation trade unions here, IUF regional secretary Ma Wei Pin urged India to support the inclusion of endosulfan in the Stockholm Convention. India's reluctance to support the ban is an

"anti-worker position", he said. "We urge India to recognise its role as a global steward. India should ban endosulfan and support the global ban," he said.

He also called for strict laws regulating the use of hazardous pesticides, adding that the onus was on whoever was polluting the environment to clean it up. "There is strong evidence that pesticides are fundamentally negative. There is no point in denying it," IUF-Asia/Pacific Information and Research Officer Jasper Goss said.

"This is an issue fundamentally of

human rights, the right to have a safe working environment. Endosulfan is a toxic chemical, a chemical which has alternatives. It need not be used," he said, adding that workers have an active role in demanding a ban on the use of harmful pesticides.

"A quarter of the income of Indian agricultural workers was being spent on health. So workers have an interest, both in terms of health and economics, to demand safer working environments," Goss said.

Sarojini V Rengam, executive director, Pesticide Action Network (PAN), said that the \$15 billion dollar

pesticide industry was influencing governments from slapping bans on hazardous chemicals.

"The use of personal protective equipment by workers handling pesticides was not practical," she said.

"The protective gear were not totally foolproof, the costs were prohibitive and their use in humid, hot climates was not practical," she said.

Kristina Olsson, international secretary of Kommunal, the Swedish Municipal Workers' Union, and Jayakumar C of Thanal also were present.

We urge India to recognise its role as a global steward. India should ban endosulfan and support the global ban

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THE HINDU

19 December 2010



DEMANDING ATTENTION: National Human Rights Commission Chairman K.G. Balakrishnan hearing grievances of Endosulfan victims at the Collectorate conference hall in Kasaragod on Saturday.

Special centres for victims mooted

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: National Human Rights Commission Chairman K.G. Balakrishnan has suggested special centres to accommodate the Endosulfan victims in Kasaragod, especially children, so that their parents, most of them daily wage workers, could go out for job.

The authorities should take adequate steps to help the victims' kin, the majority of them in debt due to mounting medical expenses.

Whether the Centre should involve itself in helping the affected, he said "the Centre can do so as it is doing in the

case of the Bhopal gas tragedy."

The NHRC would submit its recommendations to the Union Health and Agriculture ministries and draw special attention of the Prime Minister on the grave health situation prevailing here. Considering the gravity of the situation, the NHRC might send all its members to assess the situation.

On a nationwide ban on hazardous pesticides like En-

dosulfan, he said the issue did not come under the purview of the NHRC as it was not a competent body to assess health hazards due to use of a pesticide and such decision must come from the government.

He said it was for the government to decide on punitive action against the PCK, which is being held responsible for the aerial spraying of Endosulfan.

"NHRC can only make its

recommendations on a given issue," he argued.

Kasaragod MP P. Karunakaran; Manjeswaram ML, C.H. Kunhambu; district panchayat president P.P. Shyamala Devi; Collector Anant Singh; Deputy Director of Health Services Uma Maheswari; and District Medical Officer Jose D'Cruz; were among those who attended the programme.

The NHRC Chairman later visited some houses of the Endosulfan victims at Belloo and Bovikanam panchayat in the district and heard grievances of the families. He also visited a medical camp at Perla.

- NHRC to bring issue to Manmohan's attention
- Chairman visits houses of Endosulfan victims

THE HINDU

01 January 2011

NHRC deplores stand of Central government on endosulfan

Calls for national and global ban on the toxic pesticide

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Slamming the Central government's stand on the use of toxic pesticide endosulfan as leading to "a grave violation of human rights," the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has called for a nationwide ban. India should also agree to a global ban, said the Commission, which also recommended higher compensation for victims.

In its report submitted on Friday, the NHRC panel accused the government of ignoring the National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH) study detailing the harmful effects of the pesticide on the health and development of children in a north Kerala village. Aerial spraying of the pesticide appears to have caused neuro-behavioural disorders, congenital malformations in girls and reproductive abnormalities in boys. Following the NIOH's 2002 study, the Kerala government had forbidden the use of endosulfan, but

• "Government has ignored National Institute of Occupational Health study"

• "Conduct a nation-wide survey of populations affected by use of endosulfan"

"this ban has been easily circumvented," said the NHRC report.

When the Commission sent a team to Kerala for an independent investigation in November, they confirmed that medical disorders still continued in high numbers even while "the relief sanctioned by the government of Kerala has made very little impact because it is meagre, irregular and sometimes siphoned off before it reaches the intended beneficiaries."

At the international level, India was the only nation that voted against a worldwide ban on endosulfan at the last review meeting of the Stockholm Convention in October 2010. At that meeting the Indian government claimed that there was no scientific basis for a ban, despite the

NIOH's comprehensive study showing that endosulfan had serious and long-term effects on health and environment. Since the 2002 study, 60 other nations have banned the pesticide.

"When it claims a lack of scientific evidence, the government of India is either being disingenuous or disowning the work of the premier institute of medical research that it has set up," said the NHRC report. "Its directives to the ICMR to review its study, implies that the government finds its conclusions inconvenient."

The Commission said it was "deeply troubled" by the implications of this stand and the consequences it already had on human rights in India and other countries to which Indian companies had ex-

ported the pesticide.

Relief and rehabilitation

The NHRC recommended that the government conduct a nation-wide survey of populations that have been affected by the use of endosulfan and help the State governments provide relief and long-term rehabilitation, including the establishment of a Centrally sponsored palliative care hospital in Kasargode district of Kerala, where at least 6,000 victims live in 11 villages.

The State government has been asked to pay at least Rs.5 lakh to the families of the dead and severely disabled, and Rs.3 lakh to the other disabled, with financial help from the Centre. It has been asked to ensure that the increased relief is paid regularly and completely to the victims and their families, and improve health facilities for them.

The two governments have been given eight weeks to respond to the NHRC's recommendations.

28 January 2011

Plight of Endosulfan victims



CANDID GESTURE: Volunteers of Mahatma Education and Charitable Trust enact a street play before the Secretariat in the city on Thursday to portray the plight of the victims of Endosulfan in Kasargod.

— PHOTO: S. GOPAKUMAR

The Indian EXPRESS

04 March 2011

Sudheeran flays Centre's stand on endosulfan

Express News Service
Kasargod, March 3

CONGRESS leader V M Sudheeran has contradicted the statement of Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar that endosulfan was a harmless pesticide.

Addressing media persons at the Press Club here on Thursday, Sudheeran said that various lobbies were at work to retain endosulfan in the country. "While 74 coun-



tries have banned endosulfan, the Central Government is taking a stand favourable to the pesticide lobby in the country. These countries banned endo-

sulfan after conducting exhaustive studies about its harmful effects," he said.

The pesticide lobby played an active role in dissuading the country from taking a stand in favour of the country-wide ban on endosulfan at the Stockholm Convention

on persistent organic pollutants, Sudheeran added.

He later addressed the volunteers who were holding an indefinite fast in front of the Plantation Corporation godown in Peria, demanding the corporation to help endosulfan victims.

THE HINDU

12 March 2011

Banned pesticides being used in India, admits Pawar

Sujay Mehdudia

NEW DELHI: Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar on Friday admitted in the Rajya Sabha that 67 pesticides banned or restricted in a number of countries are being freely used in India.

Replying to questions during question hour, Mr. Pawar said 27 pesticides, including calcium cyanide, have been banned for manufacture, import and use in India. Nicotin sulfate and captafol have

been banned for use but their manufacture is allowed for export. Four pesticide formulations have been banned for import, manufacture and use, while seven others have been withdrawn. Thirteen pesticides, including endosulfan, are allowed with restrictions. Asked why these pesticides were being allowed in India, he said that only some countries have banned their use, while others such as Brazil and Australia continue to use them. "We take all precau-



• 27 pesticides banned for manufacture, import and use in India

• Thirteen, including endosulfan, allowed with restriction

tions in allowing use of these pesticides. Certain countries have banned them, but certain countries have allowed their use. We have taken the opinion of the scientific com-

munity and considered the interest of the farming community in allowing their use."

On reports of the presence of high level of pesticides in fruits and vegetables in cities

like Delhi, Mr. Pawar said samples were collected from time to time and appropriate action was taken.

On the use of endosulfan, Mr. Pawar said four different committees of scientists have certified it as being safe for use. However, in view of request from the Kerala government its use had been disallowed in Kerala. Similar request has been received from Karnataka and use of endosulfan is in the process of being stopped in the State.

The Indian EXPRESS

13 March 2011

Endosulfan

NCW asks Centre to take steps to contain menace

Prabhakar Rao Voruganti | IENS
New Delhi, March 12

THE National Commission for Women (NCW) has asked the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Govt of India to take appropriate action to solve the problems, arising out of Endosulfan use in the Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and others. The NCW passed this direction on a petition filed by Supreme Court advocate and rights activist Radhakanta Tripathy.

The petition explains the plight of people, especially that of the women and children by the use of Endosulfan in cashew nut plantations

IN ENDOSUL



The NCW passed this direction on a petition filed by Supreme Court advocate and rights activist Radhakanta Tripathy

result in severe health hazards. The pregnant women feel unbearable pain and give birth to deformed children.

The people living in the nearby areas also become physically and mentally challenged. Although Endosulfan has been banned in more than 70 countries in the world, India is the one country that opposed the ban of its use. In his petition, Tripathy questioned India's reluctance to ban its use.

The international conference which was held at Stockholm in October, 2010 recommended that Endosulfan should be listed as a highly hazardous chemical.

Tripathy requested the

NCW to recommend to the Centre to ban the use of Endosulfan, conduct nation-wide survey of the victims of Endosulfan use, provide them adequate medical care, rehabilitate and compensate them and enact stricter laws to regulate the use of pesticide.

In a similar petition before the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), Tripathy raised identical issues of violation of child rights by the use of Endosulfan and explained as to how it costs children's lives. Considering his petition NCPCR has asked the Secretary, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Kerala Government to re-

spond to the points as raised in the petition.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has already asked the State Human Rights Commission of Kerala, in two cases filed by Tripathy.

In the first petition, the petitioner explained the death of more than 500 people in 11 panchayats in Kasargod, Kerala. In his second petition, he emphasised on the fact that for the fault of the Health, Environment and Agriculture Departments of the state, the citizens cannot be subjected to untold miseries of deformity and numerous physical and mental challenges.

THE HINDU

04 March 2011

4/3/11 The Hindu Survey identifies 4,000 victims of Endosulfan

Roy Mathew

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Evidence is mounting on the ill-effects of Endosulfan sprayed on cashew plantations in Kasaragod district, even as the Union government continues to be ambivalent on the issue.

A survey done by the Health Department has identified nearly 4,000 victims after screening 16,000. The household survey and the screening done in 11 affected panchayats during December and January identified 3,937 victims, besides 336 in nearby panchayats. The numbers are likely to go up at least by 500 as the Health Department continues to receive complaints about non-inclusion on the list. The survey and accompanying studies officially confirmed the extent of damage done by the pesticide, which the Centre denies.

Mohammed Asheel, Assistant Nodal Officer of the Sneha Santvanam project, which is overseeing the remediation programme for the victims, says new cases will continue to be reported as the effects of Endosulfan will persist for

another 20 years. The department has constituted an expert team to screen fresh cases.

Union Minister for Agriculture Sharad Pawar had maintained in Parliament that some States had opposed a national-level ban on Endosulfan. However, Right to Information activists have found out that no State government had so far written to the Centre opposing a ban. Only a few farmers and the 'Endosulfan lobby' had argued against the ban.

The Banerji Committee and R.B. Singh Committee, appointed by the Union government, had advised the government against use of Endosulfan near waterbodies.

Endosulfan is a broad-spectrum organochloride insecticide, which is very toxic to organisms and the environment. Studies in India and abroad had detected its residues in nearly 5,000 most widely consumed foods, including fruits, vegetables, fish and meat. High levels of residues were detected in all samples of cauliflower and brinjal taken in Ranchi

(Jharkhand) in 2005. It has been found in grapes, guava, rice and mangoes in India (research studies by Shahi et al. Kumari et al. Singh et al. Jayashree and Vasudevan).

While acute toxicity from the chemical can cause death and several other problems, chronic exposure of smaller quantities of pesticide over a long period hits the immune, endocrine, reproductive and nervous systems, causing a wide range of problems. The health survey showed that 526 victims of Endosulfan in Kasaragod district were bed-ridden.

The Indian EXPRESS

21 March 2011

ENDOSULFAN 'REAL CULPRIT' BEHIND CRIPPLING DEFORMITIES

Harsha | ENS
Mangalore, March 20

THE aerial spraying of toxic pesticide endosulfan has not just left a trail of unexplained diseases and crippling deformities in Patrame, Nidle and Kakkada villages alone, but in more than 76 villages spread across five Assembly constituencies.

The horrific truth has even stunned those in the forefront of a campaign demanding a ban on the pesticide. The highest concentration of mentally retarded children in Puttur, Sullia, Beltangady, Vitla and Bantwal Assembly segments had seemed no more than a big puzzle until an RTI activist pinned down

endosulfan as the 'real culprit' behind these crippling deformities.

Sanjeev, who works as a precast worker in Puttur, set out to strengthen the hands of those demanding a ban on endosulfan by seeking information under the RTI from Karnataka Cashew Development Corporation (KCDC), which extensively used toxic pesticide-laden choppers to spray cashew plantations on the hills for over two decades.

Beginning from 1978 to 2001, KCDC confessed to aerial spraying of the pesticide in 6,387.28 acres of cashew plantations in more than five Assembly constituencies. Activist and a victim of en-

dosulfan poisoning (with a vision of ten per cent), Sridhar Gowda, based on his Kakkada experience, begun a campaign to identify the extent of diseases and deformities in endosulfan-sprayed areas.

An untiring human rights crusader, Dr Ravindranath Shanbhag, swung into action by successfully convincing gram panchayats on the need to undertake a quick survey of the dangerous diseases, deformities and deaths in the region in order to back the state's justification in banning endosulfan and eventually envisage a rehabilitation package for thousands of retarded children in the hinterland.

The Indian EXPRESS

18 April 2011

Pawar Should Quit: Vandana Shiva

Express News Service

Kasargod: Social activist Vandana Shiva said here on Sunday that Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar was responsible for not banning Endosulfan in the country. Delivering the keynote address at the national convention demanding ban on Endosulfan held at the Municipal Conference hall here, Vandana Shiva said Sharad Pawar should resign from Union Ministry because of his support to the Endosulfan. She said if he was not ready to resign on his own, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and AICC president Sonia Gandhi should expel him from the ministry.



BATTING FOR ENDOSULFAN VICTIMS: Vandana Shiva speaking at the convention demanding a ban on Endosulfan in Kasargod on Sunday. PICTURE: EXPRESS

Vandana Shiva said Sharad Pawar was corrupt. She said that he had misled Parliament on the Endosulfan

issue. Describing Endosulfan as a deadly poison, she said this poison should not be allowed to be used.

Deadly chemicals were once used in war, but it was now being used in agriculture to kill the people slowly,

she said. She said Sharad Pawar should visit here and see the victims of Endosulfan. She said the profit from the tax exemption given to the ICC in cricket should be used for the rehabilitation of the victims.

Vandana said Sharad Pawar and some scientists were keeping silence on Endosulfan.

Forest and Wildlife Minister Benoy Viswom, P Karunakaran MP, VM Sudheeran, MLAs K V Kunhiraman and K Kunhiraman, district panchayat president P P Shyamala Devi, K P Satheesh Chandran, T Asif Ali, Narayanan Peria and T C Madhava Panicker addressed the convention.

THE HINDU

17 April 2011

Vandana Shiva to launch drive against Endosulfan

To visit Kasaragod today to express solidarity with victims

Special Correspondent

KOCHI: Environmental activist Vandana Shiva will visit Kasaragod on Sunday to express solidarity with the victims of Endosulfan.

She will meet Union Minister for Environment Jairam Ramesh soon as part of a national campaign for a ban on the pesticide.

Addressing the media here on Saturday, she said the campaign would be aimed at taking up the issue at the international level. A meeting to be convened by the United Nations was expected to consider a ban on the pesticide in different countries soon, she said.

She alleged that the Union government was not taking up the case of ban on the pesticide because of the influence exerted by vested interests. A ban would be a significant step in the crusade against harmful pesticides, she added.

Multinational companies engaged in seed business were thriving with the support of the Union government. Anti-farmer policies, such as import of palm oil, were being adopted by the



ECO CONCERNS: Environmental activist Vandana Shiva addressing a meeting organised by the Organic Kerala Charitable Trust in Kochi on Saturday.

government, she pointed out.

Adopting organic methods of agriculture to raise a variety of crops would help the people lead a more healthy life. High agriculture production would be a failure if it led to diseases among people. Punjab had increased its grain output, but the high incidence of diseases caused by pesticide residues had be-

come a cause for concern. "Food is about health and nutrition," she said.

Call to farmers

She urged farmers of Kerala to take up a multi-crop pattern of agriculture. A book on jackfruit-based cuisine was to be published by a voluntary organisation based in Delhi in a bid to propagate the

multiple uses of the fruit.

Earlier, she spoke at a seminar organised by the Organic Kerala Charitable Trust.

R.V. Varma, Chairman, Kerala Bio-Diversity Board, environmental activists and experts such as C.M. Joy, I. Balachandran, M.K. Prasad, K.S. Purushan, C.R. Neelakantan and K.V. Jayakumar spoke.

THE HINDU

18 April 2011

Stockholm Convention will discuss global ban on endosulfan

Roy Mathew

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The world will be watching India as the conference of parties to the Stockholm Convention meet in Geneva from April 25 to 29 to discuss, among other things, a global ban on the pesticide endosulfan.

India was the only member country to take a stand against the ban at the Sixth Meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee to the Convention that recommended the ban last year.

Domestic opposition to India's stand has been growing ever since. However, the Central government has not relented. A national convention was held in Kasaragod on Sunday to press the Centre to change its stand.

Already 81 countries have either banned or decided to phase out endosulfan, while 27 are still using the insecti-

cide. There is strident demand for its ban in countries such as the Philippines. The stand those countries would take on the Review Committee's recommendation at the conference of parties is to be seen. As of now, 173 countries are parties to the Convention and about 20 chemicals have been approved for elimination, restriction or curtailing of unintentional production under the Convention with or without exemptions.

India exports about 50 per cent of its production of endosulfan and the manufacturers are pressing the Union government to oppose the move for a global ban. They say that the ban would deprive the farmers of a cheap and effective broad spectrum pesticide.

However, non-governmental organisations and individuals campaigning against the pesticide note that endosulfan caused more than 150 dis-

eases and abnormalities, many of them severe in nature.

Health surveys under expert supervision identified more than 4,000 victims in Kasaragod district of Kerala alone and their numbers are growing. More than 500 patients were bedridden, while about 2,000 needed assistance to move around.

Various abnormalities have been found among the population near the estates of the Plantation Corporation of Kerala, where aerial spraying of endosulfan had been done for more than two decades. The insecticide was found to be persistent in the environment for years.

A chemical has to be persistent, bio-accumulative and capable of endangering human health and long-range transport to attract ban under the Stockholm Convention which deals with persistent organic pollutants.

19 April 2011

State to press Centre for Endosulfan ban

Conference of parties to Stockholm Convention begins in Geneva on April 25

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Kerala government will press the Centre to adopt a stand in favour of a global ban on the production and use of Endosulfan at a conference of parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants beginning in Geneva on April 25.

Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan said here on Monday that he would soon write to the Centre demanding that it change its stand. The Centre was adopting a cruel stand, ignoring the travails of the victims of Endosulfan. The State government would send the findings of expert teams on Endosulfan to the convention secretariat.

Forest Minister Benoy Viswom demanded that India



V.S. Achuthanandan says he will soon write to the Centre seeking a change in its stand.

support the recommendation for a global ban on Endosulfan at the convention.

Addressing a press conference here, the Minister said the Centre should end its

"hide and seek" in respect of Endosulfan and sympathise with the victims. India's stand at Stockholm should not be determined by trade interests, he said adding "the policy of Union Minister for Agriculture Sharad Pawar should not become the country's policy."

Mr. Viswom recalled that he had written to the Union Minister and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh urging them that the Centre support a ban on Endosulfan at a Meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee to the convention. However, the Centre ignored his call. It dropped out of the discussions at the committee, which had since recommended a ban. He would write to the Centre again to press for the ban.

He called upon all to join the protest and signat campaign against the Centre government's stand on Endosulfan. India produces 9,000 tonnes of Endosulfan a year and half of it is being used within the country.

He said the State Forest Department had suggested that estates of the Plantation Corporation of Kerala (PC) in the Endosulfan-affected areas of Kasaragod district taken back by the government on expiry of the lease and set apart for rehabilitation of the victims. This, only with respect to areas where the spraying of Endosulfan had affected people. Central clearance would be needed for the proposal.

See also Page 4

THE HINDU

18 April 2011

India should join consensus on Endosulfan ban: Vandana Shiva

Says Sharad Pawar succumbing to pesticide lobby

Special Correspondent

KANNUR: Environmental activist Vandana Shiva has called upon the Union government for an absolute ban on manufacture, supply and use of Endosulfan in the country.

Delivering the keynote address at a national convention on ban of Endosulfan held in Kasaragod on Sunday, Ms. Shiva said that India should stand with the call for Endosulfan ban at the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. The country would be isolated from the international community if it did not join the global consensus on Endosulfan ban, she said adding that the call for the ban was being opposed by what she called the "pesticide lobby."

She alleged that Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar was succumbing to the lobby. She recalled the Minister's exclusion from the panel constituted by the government for drafting the Lokpal Bill as demanded by the civil society in the country.

Observing that corruption was rampant in the country, Ms. Shiva said that corruption should not be confined to just bribery. Distortion of facts, attempts to mislead people and suppression of truth jeopardising the peo-



RECOGNITION: Environmental activist Vandana Shiva honouring retired agricultural officer Leelakumari Amma, who first highlighted the health issues relating to the use of Endosulfan, in Kasaragod on Sunday.

ple's interests were various forms of corruption, she said calling for steps to curb them at all levels.

Various studies on Endosulfan had proved beyond doubt the ill-effects of the pesticide on human body. She alleged that the latest panel study being conducted by a Central government panel was eyewash. Such efforts should be collectively resisted by the people, she said.

The convention was held by the Endosulfan Virudha Samara Samithi. Organising committee chairman K.P. Mohamed Kunhi presided

over the function. The convention was inaugurated by Forest Minister Benoy Viswom. Endosulfan victim Shamina read out the citizens' declaration of Endosulfan ban. Ms. Shiva also honoured Leelakumari Amma who was said to have first brought out the plight of the victims of the pesticides spraying in Kasaragod district.

Senior Congress leader V.M. Sudheeran delivered the solidarity speech at the convention. Calling on the Central government to join the call for banning Endosulfan, he said the State government

should play a vital role and send an all-party delegation to exert pressure on the Centre to take a positive stand for the ban at the Stockholm convention. He said Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan had promised that the government would take the initiative to send the delegation. P. Karunakaran, MP, Indian Lawyers' Congress State president T. Asaf Ali, social activist C.R. Neelakantan, district panchayat president P.C. Shyamala Devi and Kasaragod municipal chairman T.E. Abdulla were present at the convention.



19 April 2011

Victims pin hopes on Stockholm Convention for Ban on Endosulfan

The Convention is expected to discuss a global ban on Endosulfan

by Kalathil Ramakrishnan

Kasargod: The people of the district, who are hit by the spraying of Endosulfan, are looking forward to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), which will meet in Geneva in Switzerland from April 25 to 29, for a ban on the deadly pesticide.

According to official figures, there are a total of 11 Endosulfan-affected grama panchayats in the district and as many as 3,548 people are suffering from various diseases caused by the spraying of the pesticide.

The Health Department had confirmed that all of them were victims of Endosulfan while another 500 had died of Endosulfan-related diseases.

The Stockholm Conven-

tion is expected to discuss a global ban on Endosulfan. Last year, the UN POPs Review Committee (POPRC), after a rigorous process for evaluating Endosulfan, had recommended listing of the pesticide as a new persistent organic pollutant (POP) for worldwide elimination.

But India was not in favour of the ban. Environmental activists had raised a hue and cry in the country demanding that India join other countries in demanding ban on Endosulfan.

The 27-nation European Union and the governments of Canada Australia, Indonesia, New Zealand, Malaysia, South Korea and Sri Lanka have taken decisive steps to protect human health and the environment by phasing out and banning Endosulfan, according to anti-Endosulfan

activists.

In June last year, the US Environmental Protection Agency had announced its decision to terminate all uses of Endosulfan because it posed unacceptable risks to agricultural workers and wildlife, and can persist in the environment, they said.

The national convention against Endosulfan held here on Sunday had made a strong demand for the ban on Endosulfan at the Stockholm Convention.

The convention exhorted to boycott the scientists, officials and the public who support Endosulfan.

The meet also demanded that the Central and State Governments jointly pay the compensation to the victims.

But the view of the Union Ministry of Agriculture was

that a ban on Endosulfan would be made only on the strength of the report of the new commission appointed by the Central Government.

The new commission visited some of the affected areas here on April 15. Another visit is due shortly.

But the Pesticide Manufacturers' Association, which had held a media conference in Chennai a few months ago, said that the diseases in Kasargod district might have been caused by some other factor than the spraying of Endosulfan.

It had alleged that the European lobby was behind the demand for ban on Endosulfan, "a cheap and effective pesticide".

The agitation against Endosulfan was funded by the European lobby, it had alleged.

THE HINDU

20 April 2011

Expedite relief for Endosulfan victims: NHRC

J. Balaji

NEW DELHI: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has asked the Kerala government to expedite relief measures in the form of financial and medical assistance to victims affected by the indiscriminate use of pesticide Endosulfan, particularly in Kasargod district.

The commission directed the State government to make use of the services of a charitable trust which had volunteered to set up special schools and hospitals for Endosulfan victims.

The NHRC held a

meeting here on Tuesday to review the implementation of its recommendations on the Endosulfan issue.

Secretary of the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR), who participated in the meeting, told the meeting that an epidemiological study was already going on in the area through the local Calicut Medical College and the data was likely to be available soon. The ICMR had already constituted a committee to examine the NIOH report on Endosulfan.

This committee would also evaluate the data generated by the Medical

College and help in planning further studies by them. The committee would also be requested to examine the feasibility of conducting a study in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana and Karnataka.

A meeting to review the action taken on the proposed activities of the Kerala government covering social security as well as medical facilities for the victims of Endosulfan use would be held after two months, the NHRC said.

Additional Health Secretary of the Central government said a health team had visited Kerala

recently to discuss the assistance which could be provided by the Health Ministry for Endosulfan victims.

The Health Ministry would seek to provide for up gradation of medical facilities in the affected area.

The Kerala government, which sought adequate financial and medical help from the Centre for providing relief to Endosulfan victims, said the monthly assistance to the 4,273 Endosulfan victims had been increased by the Kerala government to Rs.2,000 from Rs.300 from December 2010.

The Indian EXPRESS

21 April 2011

VS leads anti-endosulfan signature campaign

21/4/11
NIE



Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan inaugurating the signature campaign against endosulfan on Wednesday | Rajeev Prasad

T'Puram: In an attempt to make the Union Government take a stand against the use of endosulfan at the Stockholm Convention, a signature campaign at the initiative of the Anti-Endosulfan Campaign Committee was

held here on Wednesday.

Inaugurated by Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan at 11.30 a.m., it was attended by a galaxy of Ministers and cultural leaders. Ministers M A Baby, M Vijayakumar, Binoy Viswam, Mullakkara

Ratnakaran and P K Sreemathi took part in the signature campaign. The campaign, which collected over 400 signatures in a day, also saw the participation of eminent personalities such as P Govindapillai, Sugathakumari,

Lenin Rajendran, Pukasa secretary V N Murali, Shaji N Karun and Madhusoodhanan Nair among others.

The collected signatures were sent to the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests in the evening. ENS

22 April 2011

Ban on Endosulfan Will not End the Problem

Studies have revealed that most of the pesticides used by the farming community in Kerala and elsewhere in India are as toxic as endosulfan

by Divya Nambiar

Kochi: The Stockholm convention on persistent organic pollutants to be held from April 25 to 29 will hopefully focus on steps to control the use of dangerous pesticides, including Endosulfan. The tragedy is that even if it is banned, the threat of equally harmful pesticides will continue. Studies have revealed that most of the pesticides used by the farming community in Kerala and elsewhere in India are as toxic as Endosulfan. The chemicals are suspected to trigger dangerous diseases, including cancer.

Environmentalists had been observing Kuttanad, the rice bowl of Kerala, for decades on account of the increasing rate of cancer cases. A 1993 study of the Thiruvananthapuram Medical College had recorded that the rate of cancer (especially of lip, stomach, skin and brain, lymphoma, leukaemia and multiple myeloma) was high in the region. A 2005 survey of Dr P Indira Devi of

the Kerala Agricultural University makes a similar observation. Many chemicals such as monocrotophos, round-up, malathion and lindane, which are used widely in the region were suspected to be behind the disease. Most of them were banned by EU and WHO, citing high toxicity.

The increasing rate of mentally-retarded births in the tea plantations of Wayanad and cardamom areas of Idukki also was suspected to be because of chemicals used in the plantations. The chemicals pose a serious threat to biodiversity as well. For instance, the fox, once found in large numbers in Kerala, is a rarity. The reason? Widespread use of endosulfan and furon, banned by many countries, including the EU.

A rapid assessment survey conducted by the Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (KSCSTE) substantiates the view. "Many species of birds and animals were found to be facing the threat



of extinction in our survey," says V S Vijayan, former Chairman, Kerala Biodiversity Board, and a member of the panel which conducted the survey.

Many of the widely-used chemicals in the region, including furon, ekabaz, rogor, thimet, gramason and swat, were found to be in the banned list of several na-

tions. Punjab's Mahua cotton belt is also known as a cancer belt. "A train from Abohar to Bikaner daily carries at least 100 cancer patients. Innumerable cases of abortion, sterility, skin diseases, mental disorders, were also reported from the region where there is a massive use of pesticides," says Navya Soumya Mishra of the Centre for En-

vironment and Science, Delhi.

Chemicals such as aldrin, heptachlor and endosulfan were detected from the blood samples of patients in the region.

Cases of adverse health impact were reported from Orissa's paddy, cotton and vegetable belt as well. Acutely toxic insecticides, including monocrotophos, which is banned in the US, are in the dock here.

Unfortunately, scientists are unable to back up their claims with sufficient evidence due to lack of scientific and systematic studies on the cause of these diseases. "There is no scientific proof to endorse the claim that chemicals used in the fields are causing the diseases," a Kerala-based agricultural scientist said on condition of anonymity.

"Initially, the same happened in the case of endosulfan. When the symptoms of the problem were noticed first, there was no scientific study to prove the reason," she said. ENS

THE HINDU

21 April 2011

Endosulfan ban: Kerala team to meet Manmohan

State will observe April 25 as Anti-Endosulfan Day

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Cabinet on Wednesday decided to send an all-party delegation to the Centre to press for India's support to the proposal for global ban on Endosulfan at the conference of parties of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

Health Minister P.K. Sreemathy will head the delegation which will meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and urge him that the country should support the proposal.

Briefing the media after a Cabinet meeting, Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan noted that the expert committee of the Convention had recommended global ban on Endosulfan after 10 years of studies.

India was opposing the ban without even considering the scope for getting funding from the United Nations for using alternatives to Endosulfan. Already, 81 countries had banned the pesticide while 27 were undecided.

The Chief Minister noted that the Central government had not yet shown willingness to give any assistance to



P.K. Sreemathy, Health Minister, will head the State delegation.

the State for payment of compensation to the victims of Endosulfan and their rehabilitation.

It had submitted a compensation package of Rs.217 crore as directed by the National Human Rights Commission and a rehabilitation package of Rs.125 crore for Central assistance.

Mr. Achuthanandan said 16 teams had studied the effect of Endosulfan on the people of Kasaragod district during the past 10 years. It was cruel for the Centre to insist on subjecting the victims to further studies. The Centre was

- Mass pledge in all districts on Monday
- 81 countries have banned Endosulfan

scoffing at the victims and the people.

He said Kerala would observe April 25, the day on which the conference of parties begins in Geneva, Switzerland, as Anti-Endosulfan Day. Mass pledges would be taken at all district headquarters on the day against Endosulfan. A Minister would be in charge of organising the protest in each district. The Chief Minister will attend the function in Thiruvananthapuram.

He assured that the government was taking steps for decontamination of the environment in the affected areas and supply of pure drinking water besides giving various assistances to the victims. Many women in the affected areas were resorting to abortion fearing that their children would be born with abnormalities.

See also Page 4

Implement NHRC report, says NGO

Call for total ban on Endosulfan

J Balaji

NEW DELHI: The non-governmental organisation Toxic-Watch Alliance (TWA) has urged the Centre to ban the pesticide Endosulfan immediately.

Indiscriminate use of the chemical in cashew plantations in Kasaragod district and adjoining areas for several years has reportedly caused side-effects, in alarming proportions, to the local people, leaving many with deformities and genetic disorders. The issue has triggered a series of agitations by NGOs and political parties.

TWA convener Gopal Krishna, in a petition to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on Tuesday, recalled the recommendations of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in December 2010 suggesting a total ban on the pesticide.

"I urge you to resist the unethical and immoral influence of Endosulfan manufacturers and protect the health of present and future generations by approving and endorsing a ban on Endosulfan," Mr. Krishna said adding the Indian government should take a clear-cut stand on banning it in the

- Asks Centre to join international consensus

- NFIW members stage protest in New Delhi

fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants in Geneva from April 25 to 29.

The NHRC had asked the Centre to "join the international consensus at the Geneva meeting and permit the listing of Endosulfan as an Annex A chemical," he said.

Protest

Meanwhile, members of the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW), led by its general secretary Annie Raja, staged a protest in front of Krishi Bhawan (Agriculture ministry) here on Wednesday demanding a ban on Endosulfan. The NFIW alleged that the Agriculture Ministry was safeguarding the profit motives of companies including multinational ones at the expense of the life of the people. A few students of Delhi University joined the stir.

22 April 2011

Union Ministers should clarify stand: VS

'Ministers from State should press for change in Centre's stand on Endosulfan'

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Chief Minister V. S. Achuthanandan demanded here on Thursday that Union Ministers from Kerala should clarify their stand on banning Endosulfan.

The Chief Minister said there were six Central Ministers from Kerala, including Defence Minister A.K. Antony. Of them, K.V. Thomas had shared Union Minister for Agriculture Sharad Pawar's view in favour of continued use of Endosulfan. However,

- Says Centre turning a blind eye to the tragedy
- 'India will become a laughing stock at Geneva'

he expressed regret later following public protests. But the Union Ministry of Agriculture continued to justify the use of Endosulfan. Mr. Achuthanandan said the Central government was turning a blind eye towards the tragedy in Kasaragod district.

The Union Ministry was maintaining that another study by the Indian Council

of Medical Research (ICMR) was needed before deciding on the ban.

However, an earlier study by the ICMR in Kasaragod district had shown that the pesticide was dangerous. India would become a laughing stock by adopting a stand against the ban for the benefit of Endosulfan manufacturers when the conference of par-

ties of Stockholm Convention is meeting in Geneva.

He said the Central Ministers from Kerala should press for change in the Central government's stand. Otherwise, they should admit their inability to do so to the people.

They should also explain why the Centre was not considering assistance to the compensation and rehabilitation packages submitted by the State for Endosulfan victims.

See also Page 6

The Indian EXPRESS

22 April 2011

Antony & Co should make stand clear on endosulfan issue: CM

TPuram: Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan has demanded an explanation from the Union Ministers from the state regarding the Central Government's stand that endosulfan need not be banned.

Right from A K Antony, who is part of the Congress high command, and the Minister of State for Agriculture K V Thomas, there are six Union Ministers from Kerala. K V Thomas, who had initially shared Sharad Pawar's justification of the use of endosulfan, had later taken back what he had said and apologised following public outrage.

Yet the Agriculture Department still continues to justify the use of endosulfan.

The approach of the Union Agriculture Department that an ICMR study should be conducted before deciding

on the safety aspects of endosulfan, at the time of the significant Geneva Convention, is extremely unfortunate, Achuthanandan said.

As it is, several studies have already proved that endosulfan is harmful and the Indian stand that supports the endosulfan manufacturers is becoming a matter of ridicule before the world.

The Union Government, which refused to ban endosulfan even after 81 countries banned it, should also explain why the relief measures for the endosulfan victims, as directed by the Human Rights Commission, were never considered.

The people of Kerala are looking intently whether the Ministers from Kerala would put pressure on the Central Government to request a ban on endosulfan at the Geneva Convention.

If they cannot do so, the Ministers should come out and make their stand public, demanded the Chief Minister.

SATYAGRAHA ON APRIL 25

Demanding a stand favourable to the ban on endosulfan at the Geneva Convention by the Union Government, a satyagraha will be held on April 25 as part of Anti-endosulfan Day.

The satyagraha will be inaugurated by Chief Minister V.S Achuthanandan at the Martyrs' Square at Palayam.

Several programmes have been organised at all districts on April 25 as part of the Anti-endosulfan Day, the responsibility of each district being given to a minister. Ministers, people's representatives, environmentalists and service organisations will take part.

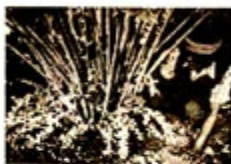
24 April 2011

Despite Ban, Endosulfan is Aplenty in Idukki

by Toby Antony

Kattappana: Idukki, with its vast plantation sector and vegetable farms, is vulnerable to the ill-effects of Endosulfan and other toxic pesticides. The exorbitant use of pesticides has put human health at grave risk and several cases of chronic poisoning, cancer and congenital abnormalities are being reported from the district.

However, further studies and researches are yet to be conducted here. Toxic pesticides are widely used in cardamom plantations of Idukki which accounts for 55 percent of the country's production. The use of Endosulfan is continuing unabated even after the government imposed a ban on Endosulfan. The hazardous pesticide is used to fight fungal infection in cardamom crops caused by untimely and in-



cessant rainfall.

As cardamom fetches high price now and with high rainfall, the farmers resort to the pesticide use, ignoring their side-effects.

Official sources said the Endosulfan was being sourced from Tamil Nadu. Even as authorities claim that strict measures are being adopted to curb the smuggling of Endosulfan from Tamil Nadu, the pesticide is being used widely in the plantations.

Many highly poisonous pesticides, fungicides, herbicides and other chemicals are also being used in the district. A government doc-

tor in Kattappana said around 35 persons had come to him with symptoms of cancer during for the last one year. The number of patients with liver, oesophagus and intestinal cancers has increased over a year. Many patients complain of allergies, asthma and skin problems.

The use of pesticides also causes congenital problems. Such abnormalities have been noticed in the Endosulfan-affected areas of Kasargod. Writer and journalist K T Rajeev, who won the Statesman Award for his article on Endosulfan, said Idukki was facing grave danger from toxic pesticide.

"The pesticides are used in vast quantity that the whole biodiversity is getting affected. Around 40 tons of pesticides is used in plantations every year putting human health at high risk. Though the government has

imposed a ban on Endosulfan, the pesticide is reaching the state from Tamil Nadu in large quantity. The plantation workers, mainly Tamilians, are the worst affected. When it rains, the pesticides flow to river by which the whole water source gets polluted. People in the whole state will be affected as the agriculture produce from the district is being sold in other parts of the state," Rajeev said. Despite the tireless campaign against Endosulfan, there is still good demand for the pesticide among farmers.

"There is a good demand for toxic pesticide like Endosulfan in the district. Several farmers come to us asking for such toxic pesticides. Even some of them had asked us to supply it through backdoor sources," James, owner of a pesticide shop in Kattappana, says.

The Indian EXPRESS

23 April 2011

Ramesh Averse to Blanket Ban on Endosulfan

New Delhi: Amid growing demand by environment activists and various political parties for a central ban on the use of Endosulfan, Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh on Friday said the pesticide would be banned if its adverse effect on health was proved.

"Endosulfan is banned in Kerala. I respect the decision of the government of Kerala and if there is evidence to show that it has all India health effects, we will ban it at the national level," he told

reporters on the sidelines of a function here.

Ramesh was reacting to a question on Kerala's demand for all India ban on the pesticide.

However, the minister said Endosulfan was a broad spectrum pesticide and there are no other cost effective alternatives to it as yet.

The country is witnessing a concerted campaign by a section of the society since last few months, seeking nation-wide ban on the use of Endosulfan following re-



ports of adverse effects among the people of Kasargod district after the Plantation Corporation of Kerala

resorted to aerial spraying of undiluted Endosulfan on cashew plantations.

Ramesh said he was aware of the disaster in Kasargod and have asked for more evidence. "Some people say there are other districts in Karnataka, which have also been affected. I am very sensitive to this issue," he said.

Alleging that there were lot of lobbies working for and against the Endosulfan, Ramesh said, "I do not want to fall victim to any lobby -- either the anti-Endosulfan or

pro-Endosulfan lobby... will go by the evidence that have. I fully support the ban that the Kerala Government has imposed." However, the Ministry of Agriculture will decide ultimately on the availability of alternative Endosulfan, he added.

An all-party delegation from Kerala led by Health Minister P K Sreemathi to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Friday to press a nationwide ban on Endosulfan.

MORE: P2



HITLER VERSUS PAWAR: A flex board in Kasargod town shows the picture of Hitler and Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar under the heading 'The holocaust then and now' as part of the campaign to ban Endosulfan | Express

Study Finds Health Problems in Endosulfan-hit Areas

Kozhikode: A study on health hazards in Endosulfan-affected areas of Kasargod district has revealed high number of infertility and diseases such as cancer and brain tumour among people below the age of 50.

The study was conducted by Dr T Jayakrishnan, Department of Community Medicine, the Kozhikode Medical College Hospital. It was a comparative study between Muliya gramapanchayat, where the Planta-

tion Corporation of Kerala (PCK) aerial sprayed Endosulfan, and Banam, where Endosulfan was not used.

The study discovered a decline in female sex ratio in the Endosulfan-affected gramapanchayat. The study also found out that the rate of abortion and genetic disorders are manifold. Though the team had conducted biomonitoring study in 11 Endosulfan-affected gramapanchayats in the state, the epidemiology was conducted

only in two places. The study was conducted following the directive of Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan to get an authentic data on the health condition of people in the area. The study has covered around 10,000 people in the Muliya gramapanchayat and Banam. The study revealed that the Muliya gramapanchayat is having 957 females for 1,000 males whereas Banam has a sex ratio of 1,016 females. The study also unearthed health problems in animals. Still

births in animals are 3.5 per cent higher in Muliya compared to Banam. On checking the history of hospitalisation, it was found that the rate of hospitalisation was high among those staying near the PCK land. Cases of physical disability is six fold higher in Muliya compared to Banam. Interestingly, physical disability is low among children born after 2000, the year the government banned spraying of Endosulfan in the cashew plantations.

ENS

Everybody's concern



SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN: A child joins the signature campaign organised by the Muslim Students Federation demanding a ban on Endosulfan, in front of the Secretariat on Friday.

- PHOTO S. GOPAKUMAR



Signature campaign organised by the Muslim Students Federation (MSF) demanding a ban on endosulfan in India, in front of the Secretariat on Friday | Express

THE HINDU

23 April 2011

Ramesh: Endosulfan ban if ill effects proved

Says evidence needed to ban it at the national level

NEW DELHI: Amid growing demand by environmental activists and various political parties for a ban by the Centre on the use of Endosulfan, Union Minister for Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh, on Friday, said the pesticide will be banned if its adverse effect on health is proved.

"Endosulfan is banned in Kerala. I respect the decision of the government of Kerala and if there is evidence to show that it has all-India health effects, we will ban it at the national level," he told presspersons on the sidelines of a function here.

Mr. Ramesh was reacting to a question on Kerala's demand for a countrywide ban on the pesticide. However, he said, Endosulfan was a broad spectrum pesticide and there were no other cost-effective alternatives to it as yet.

The country is witnessing a concerted campaign since the past few months for a nationwide ban on the use of Endosulfan following reports of adverse effects on people in Kerala's Kasaragod district after Plantation Corporation

of Kerala Ltd. resorted to aerial spraying of undiluted Endosulfan in cashew plantations.

Mr. Ramesh said he was aware of the disaster in Kasaragod and had asked for more evidence. "Some people

say there are other districts in Karnataka which have also been affected. I am very sensitive to this issue," he said.

The government had all along maintained there was no cause-and-effect relationship between the use of Endo-

sulfan and incidence of adverse health effects.

At the sixth meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee held in Geneva last year, India had raised its voice against moving any further on the issue till its concerns, both procedural and substantive, were addressed by the conference of parties of the Stockholm Convention.

Alleging that there were lot of lobbyists working for and against Endosulfan, Mr. Ramesh said, "I do not want to fall victim to any lobby — either the anti-Endosulfan or the pro-Endosulfan lobby...I will go by the evidence that I have. I fully support the ban that the Kerala government has imposed."

"I can assure you that I will not be persuaded by the manufacturers' lobby. If there is evidence that Endosulfan should be banned or phased out, it will be the first one to support it," he said.

However, the Ministry of Agriculture will decide ultimately on the availability of an alternative to Endosulfan, Mr. Ramesh said. — PTI

VS flays Union Minister

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Chief Minister V.S.

Achuthanandan said here on Friday that the posturing of Union Minister for Environment and Forests Jayaram Ramesh as one concerned about environment was nothing but hypocrisy.

Responding to Mr. Ramesh's statement that Endosulfan could be banned only if it was proved to have adverse health effects across the country, the Chief Minister asked whether 'his' Union Minister's own State of Karnataka was not facing problems from Endosulfan

and had demanded a ban.

"It is devilish to say that further proof was required. He is bringing ridicule to his seat though his self-deceit."

Mr. Achuthanandan said that Mr. Ramesh often described himself as a person interested in protection of environment. However, his stand on Endosulfan exposed him. It had also become clear that the position against ban on Endosulfan was not that of the Agriculture Ministry alone but that of the UPA government.

The Purugamana Kala Sahitya Sangham described Mr. Ramesh's stand as inhuman.

Centre will await ICMR report, says Manmohan

State delegation demands nationwide ban on Endosulfan

J. Balaji

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Friday assured an all-party delegation from Kerala, led by its Health and Social Welfare Minister P.K. Sreemathy, that the Centre would await the report of the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) before deciding further on the request to ban Endosulfan nationwide.

He reminded the delegates that the Kerala government had already banned the pesticide in 2005. Dr. Singh said during his next visit to Kerala, he would visit Kasaragod district to see and interact with the victims suspected to be affected by the use of the pesticide in cashew plantations.

Meanwhile, Union Minister of State for Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh said that Endosulfan would be banned if its adverse effect on health was proved.

Ms. Sreemathy, justifying

• Prime Minister promises to visit Kasaragod

• 'Ban if adverse effect on health is proved'

the need for banning Endosulfan at the all-India level, told journalists that the delegation pointed out to the Prime Minister that there was enough evidence from the experience of Kasaragod to prove that the pesticide would cause irreparable damage to the environment and human beings exposed to it. An earlier study of the ICMR had proved this and "we strongly believe that there is no need for dragging on the matter in the name of further study."

The delegation wanted Dr. Singh to give appropriate instructions so that India took a strong stand against Endosulfan and sought its ban during

the April 25 discussion on Stockholm convention on the use of persistent organic pollutants to be held in Geneva.

The 13-member delegation comprised Kerala Water Resources Minister N.K. Premachandran, Devaswom Minister Kadannapally Ramachandran, Forests and Housing Minister Benoy Viswom and Transport Minister Jose Thekkayil; C.T. Ahamed Ali and A.K. Saswendaran (IUML); Thalekunnil Bashir (Congress); P.C. Thomas (Kerala Congress-AMG); V. Muraleedharan (BJP); Joy Abraham (Kerala Congress M); A.N. Rajan Babu (JSS) and Dr. Varghese George (Socialist Janata (Democratic)).

LDF MPs from Kerala will stage a dharna in Parliament complex on April 26 seeking a ban on Endosulfan and later present a memorandum to Dr. Singh.

See also Page 6

The Indian EXPRESS

24 April 2011

Against Endosulfan



DYFI PROTEST: DYFI activists take out a march in Kozhikode on Thursday against the Central government's stance on Endosulfan. — PHOTO: S. RAMESH KURUP

Endosulfan Ban: VS Deplores Centre's Stand

[Puram: Barely two days ago before the Stockholm convention, the state on Saturday stepped up its protest against the Centre's stand on endosulfan with Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan slamming Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and the UPA Government for their alleged stand favouring the pesticide lobby.

The Chief Minister said that any decision to ban the pesticide could be taken only based on the ongoing study was deplorable.

He said that though the Indian Council of Medical Research's study report was with the Centre, the Prime Minister had taken the stand that a further study was needed to take a decision which he conveyed to the all-party delegation from the state on Friday.

The Chief Minister also criticised Union Environ-

ment and Forests Minister Jairam Ramesh saying that his stand was anti-environment and anti-people.

Not just in Kerala, 96 villages in south Karnataka were also badly affected by endosulfan use. It is strange that Jairam Ramesh who hails from Karnataka is feigning ignorance about the harmful pesticide, the Chief Minister said.

He asked why the six ministers in the Union Government from Kerala were keeping silent on the issue.

These ministers were also not concerned about getting Central aid for the rehabilitation package for endosulfan victims as prescribed by the National Human Rights Commission while the state was giving pension to 5,000

victims at Rs 2,000 each, he said. Criticising Union Defence Minister A K Antony, he said that Antony did not utter a word about the issue



despite being the former Chief Minister of the state and also launching his election campaign from Kasargod. He said the notion so far had been that only Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar and

the Agriculture Ministry were supporting endosulfan.

With the Prime Minister and Environment and Forests Minister speaking in the same tone, it had become clear that the Congress and UPA Government were also favouring the pesticide lobby, he said.

MULLAKKARA WRITES TO PAWAR

[Puram: Agriculture Minister Mullakkara Ratnakaran has written to Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar seeking a nation-wide ban on endosulfan. He also urged Pawar to ensure India's support to a global ban on the pesticide at the conference of parties of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants scheduled to open at Geneva on April 25. "It is unbecoming of any government to ignore this core issue pertaining to the health of the people," Ratnakaran said in a statement here on Saturday. Repeated demands by Kerala to ban the pesticide have gone unheeded by the Centre, Ratnakaran said. It is not enough that the ban is effected in Kerala alone. The situation is such that the pesticide is being smuggled in from neighbouring states under various names and used in the plantations of Idukki and Palakkad. ENS

THE HINDU

24 April 2011

VS to lead 'satyagraha'

State-wide protest tomorrow demanding ban on Endosulfan

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Kerala government and various non-governmental organisations will organise protests across the State on Monday demanding a ban on Endosulfan as the conference of parties of the Stockholm Convention meets in Geneva to consider a global ban.

Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan will lead a mass 'satyagraha' from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Martyrs' Column here demanding that India should adopt a stand in favour of the ban at the convention, and that the Centre should provide assistance to the State to compensate victims of Endosulfan. His Cabinet colleagues will lead sit-ins at district headquarters.

The Chief Minister took strong objection to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh not conceding the demand of an all party delegation from Kerala for a national ban on Endosulfan and support for the cause at the convention. "The Prime Minister should not use his office to promote the pesticide lobby like the Union Minister for Agriculture Shree P. Waman Rao," he said. Mr. Singh should look into



V.S. Achuthanandan condemns Centre's action.

the issues presented by the delegation on Friday seriously, he said.

Urging Mr. Singh to rethink his stand, the Chief Minister called upon the Prime Minister to discuss the matter in the Cabinet. Union Ministers from Kerala should also rethink their stand and support the ban. It was regrettable that the Centre was not assisting the State to provide the compensation recommended by the National Human Rights Commission to the victims.

He warned that the Prime Minister would face situation similar to the 2G spectrum scam and people's protest against corruption under the

leadership of Anna Hazare if he went by the views of people like Mr. Pawar. Mr. Pawar was one who had supported the sugar lobby ignoring the cause of farmers. Now, he was claiming that he was trying to protect the interests of farmers elsewhere in India. No government should ignore the travails of the people on the ground that they were from two States only.

Describing Union Minister for Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh as "anti-people and anti-environment," Mr. Achuthanandan asked whether Mr. Ramesh did not know that Endosulfan was dangerous.

People of 96 villages in his home State of Karnataka had been hit by the pesticide. As a prelude to the programmes, an exhibition of paintings would be organised at the Martyrs' Column on Sunday.

The Green Community announced that it would organise 'satyagraha' from April 25 to 29 in front of the Secretariat to coincide with the meeting of the conference of parties of Stockholm Convention.

See also Page 4

25 April 2011

Film on Endosulfan tragedy for Geneva

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: An hour-long documentary on the tragedy wrought by Endosulfan on the Kerala-Karnataka border and large parts of Punjab titled *A Pestering Journey* is to be shown on the sidelines of the Conference of Parties to the Stockholm Convention beginning in Geneva on Monday.

The film, directed by

award-winning documentary maker K.R. Manoj, has been made in Malayalam, English, Punjabi, Hindi and Tulu. The film interrogates the legitimate forms and technologies of killing available in a culture. In an atypical move, it explores the genocide-like dimensions of pesticide use in the country, raising troubling questions about familiar binaries such as nature and culture and life and death.

Medical study reconfirms mortal effects of Endosulfan

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: An epidemiological study by the Kozhikode Medical College has reconfirmed that various abnormalities and diseases were higher among the people in the Endosulfan-sprayed areas of Kasaragod district than among the normal population. High levels of Endosulfan was detected in the blood samples of villagers of 11 panchayats, a decade after the State-owned Plantation Corporation of Kerala stopped spraying the pesticide in its estates in the district.

The study done by the Community Medicine Department of the government medical college, headed by T. Jayakrishnan, showed that the reproductive health problems including infertility, precocious puberty, abortion, intra-uterine death and still birth, neonatal and child death were significantly higher among the villagers when compared to control groups.

Among the youth popula-

- Study by Kozhikode medical college
- Finds high incidence of abnormalities, diseases

tion (below the age of 40 years), the rate of surgery for heart diseases, hernia and genito urinary causes was higher.

When the prevalence of morbidity in adolescents was assessed, it was found that organ anomaly, birth defects, congenital heart disease, seizure, skin problems and reproductive disorders were significantly higher in the study group when compared to control groups.

Survey

Dr. Jayakrishnan and his colleagues C. Prabhakumari and Bina Thomas had surveyed 1,200 households in 11 worst-affected panchayats and 850 households in the control area (Banam in Kodom panchayat) which is within 30 km of the affected villages.

Percentage of intra-uterine

deaths was found to be double that of Banam in Muliya panchayat. While percentage of abortions was 7.7 in Muliya, it was only 4.4 per cent in Banam.

There are indications that occurrence of birth defects and problems like abortions have come down during the past ten years, after spraying of Endosulfan in cashew plantations was discontinued.

The study team had also done a comparison of students at a high school at Bovikanam in Muliya panchayat and Kodom Belur Government High School at Kalichandukam.

The height and weight of pupils in the Bovikanam school were found to be lower than those at the Kalichandukam school. Prevalence of morbidity was also higher in Bovikanam.

Death among siblings was 9.5 per cent in Bovikanam and 6.6 per cent in Kalichandukam. Surgery due to birth defects was also high in Bovikanam.

The percentage of students suffering from seizures and asthma was double that of Kalichandukam.

The school at Bovikanam had a 20 per cent prevalence of skin problems among students whereas it was 11 per cent in the other school. The prevalence of problems affecting the eyes was three-fold in Bovikanam.

Hormonal abnormalities were also noticed among the children.

Analysis of blood samples of 41 persons (men and women aged between 12 to 62 years) from the villages showed presence of Endosulfan (alfa endosulfan and its degradation product endosulfan sulphate) ranging from 2.21 to 117.18 parts per billion. Most of them were people who had come to medical camps and none was free of Endosulfan in blood.

The Indian EXPRESS

25 April 2011

25/4/11 NIB

BAN ON ENDOSULFAN

STATE GEARS UP FOR MASSIVE SHOW OF PROTEST TODAY

Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan will lead from the front by observing a day-long fast at the Palayam Martyrs' Column today

T'Puram: It would be a massive show of protest against endosulfan in the state with Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan leading from the front to observe a day-long fast at the Palayam Martyrs' Column here on Monday.

The other major protest will be held in Kasargod and P Karunakaran MP, will inaugurate the mass rally which will be organised demanding a country-wide ban of endosulfan.

The rally will conclude by a public meeting, which will

be inaugurated by Health Minister P K Sreemathi.

In all district headquarters various political parties and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) will be staging dharmas and marches.

The sea of protests in the state is being organised as the conference of parties of the Stockholm Convention meets in Geneva on Monday to consider the demand for a global ban of endosulfan.

Achuthanandan will lead a mass satyagraha from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. demanding that India should adopt a stand in

favour of the ban at the Convention and also seeking adequate financial assistance for the endosulfan victims of the state.

His cabinet colleagues, MLAs and MPs will also take part.

However, the Congress has decided not to be part of the LDF-sponsored protest marches and dharmas alleging that they are politicising the issue.

Instead the UDF would be organising separate protest marches and dharmas in all the district headquarters.

Several environmentalists led by former State Biodiversity Board chairman V S Vijayan will be organising a dharna at Thrissur in which Congress leader V M Sudheeran will also participate.

Achuthanandan and CPI state secretary C K Chandrappan have asked all people from all walks of life to be part of this campaign against the endosulfan and make the satyagraha a big success.

The DYFI has decided to organise a mass candle-lighting ceremony as a mark of protest at 1.30 p.m. in all

the districts across the state. In Kasargod, the DYFI will observe a "standstill strike" for 15 minutes from 1.30 p.m.

The youth wing of the CPM will also organise a public convention at VJT Hall here in the evening.

The 'Green-Community' of the Centre for Gandhian Studies will organise a five-day fast in front of the Secretariat from Monday demanding a total ban of endosulfan. Environmentalists from various districts will also take part in the fast. ENS

26 April 2011

Thousands Rally for Endosulfan Ban

Kasargod: The march taken out here on Monday as part of the state-wide observance of the Anti-Endosulfan Day turned out to be a massive rally of people demanding a ban on Endosulfan.

The march was organised to coincide with the sixth meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC) of Stockholm Convention that began in Geneva, Switzerland, on Monday.

The Anti-Endosulfan Day was observed under the auspices of the state government demanding that India take a stand in favour of the ban on Endosulfan, which wreaked havoc in 11 gramas panchayats in the district following the aerial spraying of the pesticide for nearly two decades, at the Stockholm Convention.

P Karunakaran MP flagged off the protest rally on the premises of the Government Guest House in Pudukkottai in the morning. People from all walks of life including

teachers, NGO activists, government employees, environmental activists, lawyers and doctors took part in the rally, which concluded on the Milan ground after traversing through various parts of the town.

Health Minister P K Sreemathi administered the anti-Endosulfan pledge. The minister said that there was no need of a new committee to study the issue. "What needed is that the Centre should ban Endosulfan since various committees have already studied the issue and submitted their reports. All the commissions had recommended a ban on the deadly pesticide, but the government is hesitating to ban it," she said.

P Karunakaran MP was the chief guest on the occasion. HUKL leader Chakkalamb Abdulla presided over the function. MLAs C H Karthikeyan, K Karthikeyan, C T Athanandali and K V Karthikeyan and municipal chairman T H. Abdulrahman



P Karunakaran MP flagging off the march at Pudukkottai in Kasargod | Express

tended the function. Leaders representing various political parties such as K P Suresh Chandra, E Chandrasekharan, K Surendran, K Suresh Kumar, E K Narayanan and Harish B Narayan and environmental activists attended the rally. District panchayat president P P Sivasubala Devi welcomed the participants and ADM P K Sudheer Babu proposed a vote of thanks.

Though the Congress lead-

ers kept away from the anti-Endosulfan march, the Youth Congress organised a fast at Manthoppo maddam in Kanhangad. Speaking on the occasion, Youth Congress state president P C Velmuthu MLAs said that the LDF Government had no moral right to speak against Endosulfan. He said the CPJ had left out several persons from the Endosulfan victims' list and instead included party sympathisers in the list who

were not the victims of Endosulfan. **Thrissur/Palakkad/Idukki** A host of eminent personalities came together in Thrissur, Palakkad and Idukki demanding a ban on Endosulfan. **Critic Sukumar Azhikode** read out a message against Endosulfan at Thiruvananthapuram on Monday. Azhikode said no more studies were needed to ban

the sale and use of Endosulfan as there were living examples to the ill effects of the pesticide.

"There should not be any delay in banning Endosulfan in the country," he said. Revenue Minister K P Rajendran said that there were already reports on the ill effects of certain pesticides.

Hundreds of people participated at a function held at Fort Maillan here on Monday demanding a ban on Endosulfan.

Electricity Minister A K Balan recited the anti-Endosulfan pledge which was repeated by the participants. M B Rajesh MP, Deputy Speaker Jose Baby, K K Divakaran, K S Sulekha and M Hanna were present.

Left out Meanwhile, Jana Jagratha leader P S Panicker said that environmental organisations were not invited to the Anti-Endosulfan meet and there was "unnecessary politicisation" of the event.

Pathanamthitta

In Pathanamthitta, Agriculture Minister Moolikara Ratnakaram has urged the Prime Minister to immediately declare a total ban on production and supply of endosulfan in the country.

He said that the country should take the lead in declaring a complete ban on endosulfan in view of the disastrous consequences on the people. "By imposing a ban on endosulfan, the country could become a role model for others," he said.

Kannur

In Kannur the campaign was inaugurated in front of the Collectorate by Devanarum Minister Kadannappally Ramachandran.

M Prakashan MLAs presided over the meet held as part of the protest programme. MLAs CK P Pappanadithan, P Jayarajan and K K Sallaja, BJP state president V Muralidharan and CPI leader V N Chandran were also spoke-

UDF leaders kept away from the protest programme.

Kozhikode

The district administration organised a human chain around the Mananchira Square on the day. Forest Minister Benny Vissam, District Collector Dr P B Salim, Mayor A K Prasad, Deputy Mayor Prof P T Abdul Latheef, former Mayor M Bhaskaran, BJP state president V Muralidharan, BJP district president P Raghunath and people from art and cultural spheres participated in the human chain.

Kenda Shrestha Sahitya Parishad joined the protests against Endosulfan on the day. Prior to the human chain, Forest Minister Benny Vissam inaugurated the sign collection organised by Gandhigram and Prarthithi Chikitha Association at the Kishan Corner. Dr M Naveer inaugurated the "rakthapradhina" of the Youth Congress. The MSP also organised protest march. ENS

Endosulfan: Church plea to political parties

Kochi: The Syro-Malabar Church on Monday condemned those parties engaged in political bargaining in the name of banning endosulfan.

In a statement, Syro-Mal-

abar Church Commission for Laity secretary V C Sebastian said it was highly condemnable to note that the political parties were engaged in bargaining over the ban on endosulfan while it was actu-

ally destroying the lives of the people.

"The use of pesticides like endosulfan has affected the environment. The political parties are trading charges against each other instead of

taking a common stand to ban the pesticide," V C Sebastian said.

He said the Church had decided to take a tough stand against the use of endosulfan. ENS

The Indian EXPRESS

26 April 2011

Together they rise against a 'killer'

Religious leaders, poets, environmentalists, social activists, film personalities and prominent politicians, who seldom found themselves under a common shelter, sat around the fasting Chief Minister seeking a Central ban on endosulfan



Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan pressing himself up in the middle of his fast at Martyrs' Column on Monday | KANYASR SANTOSH

by Aravind J Kumar

T'Puram: Barely two weeks back, a 70-year-old, severe-faced Gandhian by the name of Anna Hazare took on the Central Government against corruption with a fast unto death in Delhi. His fast that spanned four days saw the entire nation raving in support for him. On Monday, the city witnessed something similar at the Martyrs' Column. Mobbled by policemen and media, hounded in by fellow comrades and watched on by quite a large gathering, the 87-year-old severe-faced Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan observed a seven-hour fast in protest against the "inferable" stand of the Central Government on imposing a ban on endosulfan.

Inside the mosque erected adjacent to the Martyrs' Column, there was space for everyone who shared the sentiment. Religious leaders, poets, environmentalists, social activists, film personalities, and prominent politicians, who seldom found themselves under a common shelter, surrounded the fasting Chief Minister throughout the day. BJP leader O Rajagopal, poet Sugathakumari, actor Suresh Gopi and many more known and unknown faces lined up upholding a common cause. Together they proclaimed a solidarity that soon spread to the



V S Achuthanandan in the middle of his seven-hour fast at Martyrs' Column on Monday | EXPRESS

I am really moved by what Achuthanandan does at this age. I don't feel hungry because I am here for a serious reason

masses who waited outside the mosque in head-piercing heat. As the day plodded on, women stood in holding out placards, banners and posters and shouting slogans against endosulfan. College students, pedestrians and office-goers passed at the Martyrs' Column for a while and listened patiently to the innumerable tales of suffering from Kasargod and vehement objections from

the speakers to join the fight against endosulfan. Not too far from where Achuthanandan was lying on a sofa was a chubby, middle-aged man seated on a plastic chair trying to keep off a steady stream of sweat that trickled along his wrinkled face. Appukuttan, 82, hailing from Medical College was also on a fast since out of his reverence for the aging comrade than of his urge to be a part of the mission against endosulfan.

"I am really moved by what Achuthanandan does at this age. I don't feel hungry because I am here for a serious reason," said Appukuttan, who even neglected his daily medicines for the sake of his fast. Meanwhile, the air was rung with poems and speeches and the old man's strained, martinet words soon dissolved in the crisp, loud recital of a poem by Muvattur Kattakudi on the piteous plight of endosulfan victims.

Activist in Achuthanandan Comes to the Fore



Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan observing the day-long fast in front of the Martyrs' Column on Monday demanding a country-wide ban of endosulfan | Kanyasr Santosh

T'Puram: Once again V S Achuthanandan proved that he is still young when it comes to fighting for the people's causes in the state with a seven-hour fast from 10 am here on Monday demanding a countrywide ban of Endosulfan.

He received overwhelming support from diverse sections of society with religious, spiritual, cultural and political leaders pledging

their support in his fight against Endosulfan.

The Chief Minister unleashed a scathing attack on Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar while concluding the fast and said Pawar was supporting the pesticide lobby in the country. The Congress Ministers in the UPA Government from the state have failed to put pressure on Pawar. "Some of the Ministers in the UPA Gov-

ernment have misled the Prime Minister on the issue," he opined.

"The Centre's stand is that it would act only if all the people in the country are affected by the use of Endosulfan. The Centre should shed such inhibitions and realise the truth about the dangers of this pesticide," he said.

He also condemned the stand taken by the Centre at

the Stockholm Conference in which India opposed the ban on Endosulfan.

"This clearly proves that the Centre was with the pesticide lobby and was not concerned about the people in the state," the Chief Minister said.

"The extent of damage caused by Endosulfan is increasing daily. The pregnant mothers in Kasargod are now preferring abortion because of the fear that their newborns will have physical deformities. There are some living examples in Kasargod which no one can neglect," the Chief Minister added.

Achuthanandan ended his fast by accepting a glass of lime juice from poet Sugathakumari.

His Cabinet colleagues C Divakaran, M Vijayakumar and M A Baby and other party leaders from the LDF constituents took part in the fast.

BJP leader O Rajagopal, film actor Suresh Gopi, Basilios Cleemis, Major Archbishop Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, Palayam Imam Jamaluddin Mangada, Swami Sandeepanadigri and others pledged their support to Achuthanandan. **ENS**

THE HINDU

26 April 2011

Centre to study other opinions too

Ban request only from Kerala and Karnataka, says Manmohan Singh

J. Balaji

NEW DELHI: As Kerala observed 'Anti-Endosulfan Day' on Monday, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reportedly told the State's Leader of the Opposition Oommen Chandy and Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee president Rammesh Chennithala that the Centre would consolidate opinions from various States before deciding on the request for a nationwide ban on the pesticide.

Dr. Singh told the two leaders, who met him here, that the request for ban had come only from Kerala and Karnataka. The Central government would wait for the final report of the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR), which was studying the causes of Endosulfan, before considering the request.

- He will go to Kasaragod during next Kerala visit
- CPI(M), DYFI members stage protests in Delhi

he told them. The Prime Minister told the delegation that he would visit Kasaragod district, which has the most number of suspected victims of the pesticide, when he came to Kerala next time.

Talking to journalists after the meeting, Mr. Chandy said they requested Dr. Singh to issue directions to the ICMR to present its report within a timeframe, as the effects of the chemical had caused harm to the people of Palakkad and Idukki districts too.

The Congress leaders also wanted the Prime Minister to issue directions to officials to take a firm stand on banning the substance globally during

discussions at Stockholm Convention on the use of Persistent Organic Pollutants, now being held in Geneva.

Members of the CPI(M)'s student and youth wings, Students Federation of India (SFI) and Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI), staged a protest here demanding ban on Endosulfan. They also burnt an effigy of Dr. Singh. The activists demanded that a tribunal be set up to ensure suitable compensation to the victims of Endosulfan in Karnataka and Kerala.

"Endosulfan is a neurotoxin, a carcinogen and an endocrine disruptor," they

claimed and added that the chemical's use affected the reproductive system and thus children were born with deformities in the affected areas.

Thomas' meeting

PTI adds: Meanwhile, Union Minister of State for Agriculture K.V. Thomas met Dr. Manmohan Singh and apprised him of the issue of Endosulfan. Before the meeting, Mr. Thomas, who hails from Kerala, said: "I have handled this subject for a long time in the State and I am going to update the facts to the Prime Minister." Endosulfan was one of the cheapest pesticides that farmers use in horticulture crops. West Bengal was its largest consumer followed by Gujarat. The Minister informed the Prime Minister, sources said.

India makes move against Endosulfan ban

Roy Mathew

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The fifth Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) began in Geneva on Monday morning. The proposal for a ban on Endosulfan will come up for discussion on Tuesday as per a tentative schedule. Initial reports indicate that India is working for a consensus in the Asia-Pacific group against the ban.

However, C. Jayakumar of Thanal (a non-governmental organisation), who is at Geneva as an observer, says in an e-mail that the Indian move may not succeed as there are countries which cannot agree to a ban. "The African region is more or less talking about a common agreement of adding Endosulfan to Annex A of the convention without exemptions. The same is the news from the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC)." GRULAC is asking for financial resources to implement the ban, he added.

The Persistent Organic Pollutant Review Committee of the Convention, which met in Geneva in October last year, had recommended adding Endosulfan to Annex A of the Convention. This means a global ban on the pesticide, which allegedly caused the death of hundreds of people in Kerala and elsewhere. India had dropped out of the discussion at the review committee meeting after opposing the proposal.

The conference will also consider numerous other issues, including a report on reviewing the requirements for the use of lindane as a human health pharmaceutical for the control of lice and scabies, and endorsement of Stockholm Convention regional centres.

The Stockholm Convention, as adopted in 2001, calls for international action on 12 POPs grouped into three categories: pesticides (dieldrin, chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mirex, and toxaphene), industrial chemicals (hexachlorobenzene and polychlorinated biphenyls), and unintentionally produced POPs (dioxins and furans).

Currently, 21 chemicals are slated for global phase-out. Governments are to promote the best available techniques and the best environmental practices for replacing existing POPs.

Provision is made for a procedure to identify additional POPs and the criteria to be considered in doing so. Endosulfan has been brought in for consideration under this clause. The key elements of the treaty include the requirement that developed countries should provide new and additional financial resources, take measures to eliminate production and use of intentionally produced POPs, eliminate unintentionally produced POPs, where feasible; manage and dispose of POPs wastes in an environmentally sound manner; and substitute the use of safer chemicals and processes to prevent use of unintentionally produced POPs. The Stockholm Convention came into force on May 17, 2004, and currently has 173 parties, including the European Community.

No small task

26-4-10 The Hindu



CLEAR INTENT: Children demonstrate in front of the Secretariat in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday demanding that India adopt an anti-Endosulfan position at a global meet on the issue in Geneva, which began on the same day. — PHOTO: S. GOPAKUMAR

NAPM in favour of 'complete ban'

Gargi Parsai

NEW DELHI: The National Alliance of People's Movement, representing several civil society groups, on Monday sought a "complete ban" on the use and manufacture of the controversial toxic agricultural chemical Endosulfan.

"The deadly pesticide is banned by 81 countries and by the Kerala and Karnataka governments, yet it doesn't seem to be reason enough for the Centre to ban it all over the country. Since 1976, continued aerial spray of Endosulfan has led close to 9,000 deaths, and nearly 4,800 bed-ridden patients with severe physical and mental deformities in Kerala alone. But even then the government refuses an all-India ban. One wonders whose interest it is protecting."

The NAPM refused to buy the argument of the Pesticides Manufacturers and Formulators Association of India (PMFAD), which is opposing

the ban, that EU firms wanted to protect their commercial interests by supporting a ban on the generic production of cheap Endosulfan in India.

"On the face of it, the PMFAD seems to be concerned about the high costs that Indian farmers have to pay for pesticides, but refuse to recognise that the damage caused by Endosulfan is irreversible. Endosulfan is only one side of the story since the pesticide lobby has interests in seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and everything that farmers and communities own - land, water, seeds, knowledge and most importantly, market. It is unfortunate that the Ministry of Agriculture is resisting the ban."

Seeking a permanent ban on Endosulfan, the NAPM urged the government to provide proper relief and compensation to its victims. "The need is to invest in research and development of organic pesticides," the alliance said.

27 April 2011

HIL Found Dumping Endosulfan Waste in Lagoon



A resident showing the outlet pipe through which the company discharges the effluent in the lagoon at Elor. P. K. Jeevan Jose

Kochi: At a time when the state is clamouring for a blanket ban on controversial pesticide endosulfan, the central public sector undertaking Hindustan Insecticides Limited (HIL) at Elor in Ernakulam district has been found dumping sludge containing endosulfan chemicals in a lagoon, the arteries

ACTION SOON: HIL

When contacted, HIL personnel manager K. Mohanan said that the company had placed works order to shift the sludge from the lagoon. "We have also taken measures to clean the lagoon," he added.

of which are linked to various rivers. HIL is the major manufacturer and exporter of endosulfan in the country. A team of officials from the Kerala State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB), who conducted an inspection on the site on April 18, 2011, found that the company had not taken any

“IN SPITE OF REPEATED NOTICES, THE COMPANY HAS FAILED TO CLOSE THE LAGOON AFTER SHIFTING THE ENTIRE QUANTITY OF HAZARDOUS WASTE DUMPED IN IT”
— K. SAJEEVAN, PCB Chairman

"We had earlier directed them to shift the sludge to common treatment, storage and disposal facility at Ambalamoodu. As the company had failed to do so we have issued a show-cause notice to the company," he said. PCB Chief Environmental Engineer M. S. Mythili said the company had been directed to transfer the sludge from the lagoon before April 30, 2010. "The company has been putting forward various reasons for its failure in shifting the sludge from the lagoon. We have directed them to remove the sludge before the onset of monsoon. If it is not removed before the monsoon, the entire area may get polluted," she added.

According to the show-cause notice issued by the PCB, the company has violated the provisions under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. ENS

LDF Politicising Endosulfan Issue: Chandy



Kezhikode: The LDF is politicising the endosulfan issue and is not helping victims, said Opposition Leader Oommen Chandy.

Speaking to the media persons here on Tuesday, the Opposition Leader asked why the state government did not take any measures to ensure the complete ban on endosulfan in the last four-and-a-half years. "Despite having power, the Chief Minister waited four-and-a-half years to take a step against endosulfan and that too after the elections," said the Opposition Leader. Now he is observing fast in order to make it a political issue instead of helping the victims, said the Opposition Leader.

He said the LDF should clear its stand on the Plantation Corporation of Kerala, which is responsible for the aerial spraying of the insecticide. When asked whether the LDF would cooperate with the ban on April 29, he

said the LDF would not cooperate as the LDF had not taken even a single measure in the past four-and-a-half years to detect the sale of endosulfan and ban it in the state. Citing the details gathered through the Right to Information Act in 2008, he said, though a total of 496 persons had died due to endosulfan, the state government distributed financial aid to only 179 families of the deceased.

When asked about the outcome of the meeting held with the Prime Minister the other day, Oommen Chandy said the PM has made it very clear that he has an open mind on the issue. The Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) will conduct a study and measures would be taken after going through its report, he said. ENS

Take a Holistic View on Endosulfan

There was nothing Gandhian about Kerala chief minister's seven-hour satyagraha on Monday to demand an all-India ban on endosulfan, a pesticide commonly used in the country. All insecticides are toxic and so is this one. Why it particularly became the villain of the piece is because of its indiscriminate use by the Plantation Corporation of Kerala in its orchard farms in south Kerala. That it is a state-owned enterprise is usually forgotten. The plantation authorities used to do aerial spraying three times a year, polluting public wells and other water sources. As a result, people in the affected area, allegedly, suffer from many diseases and children are born with deformities. The responsibility was squarely that of the corporation. The spraying was banned and the state imposed a ban on endosulfan a few years ago.

If Kerala has been unable to enforce the ban, it is, again, a failure of the government. Now it wants the Centre to ban the pesticide, even though only one another state — Karnataka — has demanded it. Endosulfan is an all-purpose pesticide and is, therefore, popular with farmers. Incidentally, states like Punjab, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh have not demanded a ban, though they are major consuming states. As of now, there is no conclusive proof that if the pesticide is used in the right diluted form, it would harm human beings. Of course, many countries, including China and the US, no longer use it. However, one problem with a total ban is that the substitute for endosulfan is prohibitively expensive. In any case, farmers will have to use pesticides of one kind or another if agricultural production is not to suffer. All this will have to be taken into account while taking a decision. A satyagrah satyagraha is surely not the way to press the point that endosulfan is harmful.

Stockholm Convention: Protest Against India's Stand

TPuram: The Left Democratic Front (LDF) will observe a down-to-earth hartal on April 29, the day the Stockholm Convention, at which India has opposed the ban on endosulfan, concludes.

"The hartal is being organised to express the popular sentiments in Kerala against endosulfan and people from all walks of life will utilise the opportunity to raise their protest against the Cen-

tre too," LDF member Valiathan Vincent told reporters after the meeting. The Chief Minister observed a day-long fast at the Martyrs' Column here on Monday, the day the Stockholm Convention began, and it received widespread support. Similarly, the LDF wants to register the protest of Kerala against the Centre's decision to support the pesticide lobby on the day the conven-

tion concludes, he added. At the convention India took a stand supporting the multinational companies while neglecting the worries of the people of the country. It is very sad to note that India did not support the majority view of banning the endosulfan. "The Centre is protecting the interests of the corporates than the interests of the people, which is highly deplorable," the LDF member said.

When asked how would the LDF justify its stand against Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar while his party is a constituent of the LDF, Valiathan Vincent said that the NCP here had passed a resolution demanding a ban on endosulfan and they had given all support to the decisions of the LDF in this regard. The LDF has also asked the government to explore the

possibility of taking steps against the production of endosulfan by Hindustan Insecticides Limited in Kochi, he said. "Since it is a public sector undertaking under the Government of India, the state has its limitations in taking action against the company," Vincent said. The State Government would come forward to protect the interests of the workers employed in the company, he said. ENS

THE HINDU

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Stockholm convention: is India thawing?

Roy Mathew

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: India on Tuesday raised objections to the "absence of alternatives" in the recommendation for a global ban on endosulfan at the conference of parties to the Stockholm Convention meeting in Geneva. However, C. Jayakumar, observer from Kerala, told *The Hindu* over telephone from Geneva that there was softening in India's approach compared to its position at the previous meetings.

Though it had said the health and environmental effects of endosulfan were not established in a draft circulated in the Asia Pacific Group, India did not mention this argument in its presentation to the conference. Its delegates, instead, focussed on the absence of alternatives to endosulfan and the time needed for finding and

obtaining alternatives.

Faced with moves from the European Union to press for a decision on the ban, India stressed that the issue should be decided by consensus. However, the chair suggested that the issue of decision could be discussed at a later stage.

A contact group with Qatar as chairman was formed to sort out the differences that emerged during Tuesday's session. This group planned to meet later in the day to work out agreements on various issues.

India had circulated a draft in the Asia Pacific Group seeking postponement of a decision on endosulfan to the next conference of parties. However, this was opposed by Gulf countries such as Bahrain, Qatar and Oman, which pointed out that they had banned endosulfan. India, however, has not withdrawn the draft.

Many developing countries such as Indonesia and Uganda, besides India, raised the need for financial and technical assistance and access to technology to replace endosulfan with alternatives.

Switzerland stressed that alternatives were available and that it was willing to discuss assistance for replacement of endosulfan in the developing countries. China felt that the procedural issues raised at the meeting should be corrected.

Endosulfan has been recommended by the Convention's POPs Review Committee for addition to the list of 21 chemicals already slated for global phase-out.

At this week's session, governments will decide whether to include the persistent insecticide in the Convention, which would ban it in the 173 countries that are parties to the treaty.

Left MPs stage dharna for ban on endosulfan

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Carrying forward the protest demanding a global ban on the pesticide endosulfan, Left MPs on Tuesday staged a dharna in the Parliament House and urged the Centre to support the ban — a decision already taken by some 80 countries.

Citing that the United Nations had classified endosulfan as a "highly dangerous insect killer" and that its aerial spraying caused physical and mental abnormalities such as mental retardation, cancer, infertility, birth disorders, and damage to brain and nerves, the MPs asked Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to intervene and support the global ban.

"Now unfortunately, the Union government has so far no endosulfan stand

at the international level. On seeing the live tragic scenario in Kasaragod and other areas, the stand should be corrected..." the MPs said in a memorandum to the Prime Minister.

By opposing the ban, they said, the government was allowing multi-national companies to "plunder" the country. Strong public movements and agitations were being held across the country for banning the pesticide.

The MPs also said that the Centre had not yet shown the willingness to provide assistance to Kerala towards the compensation for and rehabilitation of the victims of endosulfan, for which it had sought Rs 442 crore.

The MPs said the Centre should issue directions to the representatives of the Stockholm Convention to speak

against the use of endosulfan and press for a total ban on the insecticide.

Leader of the Rajya Sabha for the Communist Party of India (Marxist) Sitaram Yechury led the dharna and was joined by P. Karunakaran, P. Rajeev, M.P. Achuthan, P.K. Biju, A. Sampath and Tarini Kanta Roy.

In a statement, the All-India Agricultural Workers' Union and the All-India Kisan Sabha demanded an immediate ban on the use of the pesticide, a machinery to ensure compensation for those who had suffered as result of having used or indirectly ingested it, special medical insurance scheme for such victims; legal mechanism to force corporates to pay compensation for the diseases caused by the pesticide; and a campaign against the dangers of its use.

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Quicker shift to organic farming possible: Minister

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Agriculture Minister Muthalagan Ramesh said on Wednesday that Kerala could meet its target of a total switch-over to organic farming sooner than expected.

The Minister was inaugurating a seminar on "Endosulfan: Issues and Safe Alternatives to Chemical Pesticides" organised by the Farm Information Bureau here.

Target set

Mr. Ramesh said that Kerala had drawn up an organic farming policy and had set a ten-year target for the change. It would be possible to speed up the process. In places such as Onattukara, farmers had returned to traditional farming practices without using pesticides.

He said that the State would be able to save large sums in health costs if it reduced the use of pesticides. Kerala, who made up only

3.25 per cent of India's population, were now consuming 20 per cent of the medicines marketed in the country.

Refuting the Central government's contention that there was hardly any alternative to Endosulfan, the Minister asked whether agriculture had been affected in Kerala because of the ban on that pesticide. Kerala had been demanding that States should be given powers to regulate pesticide use since agriculture was a State subject.

Referring to the Centre's stand that a national ban on Endosulfan could be imposed only if other States too demanded it, Mr. Ramesh asked if India had signed international agreements on agriculture sector after taking the consent of all States. "Did it curtail the Public Distribution System because the States had demanded that?" he said.

The seminar saw presentations on various alternatives to pesticides and ways to achieve food safety.



TOPIC OF CONCERN: Participants at a seminar on 'Endosulfan: issue and safe alternatives to chemical pesticides' organised by the Department of Agriculture in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday. — PHOTO: S. MAHESHA

Faizi: ensure aid to Endosulfan victims

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Ecologist S. Faizi, who was a member of the Pichimada High-Power Committee, has sought steps to pay compensation to the victims of Endosulfan in Kasaragod district on the universally agreed 'polluter-pays principle'.

In a statement issued here on Tuesday, Dr. Faizi said it was heartening that the State was united in its fight against Endosulfan. "Plantation Corporation of Kerala Ltd. (PCKL), which recklessly used the pesticide for years disregarding public protests, Hindustan Insecticides Ltd. and other manufacturers should provide compensation to those affected," the statement said.

The Kerala government (which owned PCKL) should immediately take action in this regard. The corporation need not source funds for this from outside. It could distribute to the victims the 2,392 hectares of land under its possession in Kasaragod after detoxifying the land, he said.

All options, including the creation of a tribunal, should

- 'Adequate evidence to ban Endosulfan'
- Call to explore creation of tribunal

be explored to get manufacturers pay compensation, Dr. Faizi said.

It was "unfortunate and embarrassing" that the Indian delegation was fighting its own people at the ongoing fifth meeting of the Conference of Parties (CoP) to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). "The arguments the Indian delegation is trying to put forth are silly and ridiculous and run against the logic and spirit of the treaty (POP treaty). If India is not ready to join the consensus, the CoP decision must be made by voting and the Rules of Procedure of CoP do provide for that. He expressed concern over the delay in getting the Presidential assent to the Pichimada Coca-Cola Victims Relief and Compensation Claims Special Tribunal Bill that was passed by the Assembly.

Tension at Stockholm meet over Endosulfan

toy Mathew

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Endosulfan, which has caused 500 leaths and maimed more than 4,000 people in Kerala, has become a test case at the conference of parties to the Stockholm Convention meeting in Geneva, according to one of the delegates.

International Institute for Sustainable Development's Reporting Service for Environment and Development negotiations said on Wednesday that Tuesday's plenary session of the conference was full and tense, as it turned attention to Endosulfan.

Endosulfan had hamstrung Stockholm's sister convention, the Rotterdam Convention, on prior informed consent procedure for certain hazardous chemicals and pes-

ticides in international trade for years.

"This unfortunate precedent had many interpreting consideration of Endosulfan as a significant test for the Stockholm Convention. Will Stockholm too, succumb to politics? Have wiser parties developed new strategies to avoid political blockades?" the reporting service asked.

"As initial views were exchanged, some participants were pleased at the apparent openness of most parties to discuss the issue while other more seasoned delegates predicted long evenings ahead," the reporting service said.

Possible exemptions

The contact group on Endosulfan and new persistent organic pollutants, chaired by Qatar, began work in the evening on thrashing out possi-

Endosulfan has become a test case at the conference, according to some delegates.

ble exemptions associated with a ban on Endosulfan.

A minority of participants questioned the mandate of the group, but after confirmation from the legal adviser, continued their work.

Majority of the countries supported a ban on Endosulfan. India has been stressing on consensus decision with the objective to postpone decision on Endosulfan ban.

Switzerland maintained that voting was an option for listing pollutants for ban. China and Japan opined that the recommendations of the

Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC) to the Convention should be by consensus.

The POPRC Chair, Reiner Arndt (Germany), who introduced POPRC's recommendation to list Endosulfan in Annex A of the Convention (for ban) with specific exemptions, noted that the recommendation was taken by consensus by all POPRC members present and voting. (India had dropped out of discussions and had not voted at the committee along with a few other countries.)

Countries of Europe, Latin American and Caribbean Group, and African Group are supporting the ban.

The United States, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Oman, Argentina, Morocco, Jordan, and Qatar are among the

countries that expressed support for the ban during the plenary session.

Cuba said the financial implications of listing must be clarified before it could support listing.

The International Stewardship Center emphasised that the proposed alternatives to Endosulfan were not affordable and that its listing would be detrimental to farmers.

Thanal, a non-governmental organisation from Kerala: the Inuit Circumpolar Council (Canada), the Pesticide Action Network, and the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation welcomed the proposal for ban.

The Indian Chemicals Council, representing the industry, said there was insufficient scientific evidence to justify a ban.

BJP for ban

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is for enforcing a ban on Endosulfan, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Sushma Swaraj has said.

Ms. Swaraj, who was here on Wednesday to attend a function organised by the party to commemorate its State unit vice-president B.K. Sekhar, told presspersons that the party had a consistent stand on the issue. This was evident from senior party leader O. Rajagopal joining the protest held here and party State unit president V. Muralidharan taking part in the one held in Kasaragod.

She said the Karnataka government had written to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on the issue.

The State governments could not do much, it was for the Centre to take the initiative. Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar had said in Parliament that he was awaiting a report of the Indian Council of Medical Research, she said.

About the stance of Gujarat on the ban, Ms. Swaraj said Chief Minister Narendra Modi did not have clear background information on the issue. She had apprised Rajendra Singh Rane, MP from Gujarat, about the gravity of the problem.

Pro-LDF trade unions, DYFI back hartal call

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Leadership of various pro-LDF trade unions and the State committee of the DYFI have come out in support of the ruling Left Democratic Front's decision to hold a hartal on April 29 to press for a ban on production and use of Endosulfan in the country.

In separate statements here on Tuesday, joint action council of trade unions and

the DYFI State committee called upon workers and youth in the State to send a strong message to the UPA government at the Centre by making the hartal a success.

In its statement, the DYFI State committee said that its 25,000 units in the State would organise torch processions on Wednesday in support of LDF's hartal call.

In another statement, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) State committee said that there was no question of the party wavering in its commitment to the anti-Endosulfan struggle because its national president Sharad Pawar was the Union Agriculture Minister.

THE HINDU

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Stop making Endosulfan: Sudheeran

Staff Reporter

KOCHI: Senior Congress leader V.M. Sudheeran has said that public sector Hindustan Insecticides Ltd. (HIL) at Eloor should immediately stop the production of Endosulfan.

In his inaugural address at an anti-Endosulfan campaign attended by several persons representing social, environmental and political parties in front of the company here on Wednesday morning, Mr. Sudheeran said that HIL could diversify its product range while deciding to stop Endosulfan production.

He said the employees need not fear that they would lose jobs, if the production of the pesticide was stopped. The government should initiate steps to protect the interests of workers by evolving plans to produce bio-friendly pesticides at HIL.



TEAM SPIRIT: Congress leader V.M. Sudheeran lighting a lamp to express solidarity with the anti-Endosulfan campaign organised in front of Hindustan Insecticides Ltd. at Eloor in Kochi on Wednesday. — PHOTO: H. VIBHU

Pointing out that Union and State governments should take the lead in announcing a comprehensive rehabilitation package for the victims of Endosulfan, Mr. Sudheeran said the company manufacturing the pesticide

should also provide compensation to the victims.

It should also be collected from the Plantation Corporation of Kerala which was responsible for the aerial spraying of Endosulfan in Kasaragod, he said.

Explaining that there was no relevance for any further study, Mr. Sudheeran said the Union government should first ban Endosulfan before initiating any new study.

He said the stance taken by the Indian delegation at the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants in Geneva dented the image of the nation known for its continuing support for human rights. He said the Union government should realise the growing protest against the use of Endosulfan.

The former MP and CPI (M) leader K. Chandran Pillai said political parties needed to include environmental issues affecting the people on its agenda of action.

See also Page 4

The Indian EXPRESS

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28/4/11 NIG
CPM & ENDOSULFAN BAN**Tormentor Now in Saviour's Clothing**

athil Ramakrishnan

rgod: It's an irony of The LDF and the CPM, pushing for a ban on sulfan with agitations, nger stir and a hartal, over 11 years back, with brute force against the use of the ticide in the far-flung vil- es of the district. The state s then ruled by the LDF th E K Nayanar as the ief Minister.

On December 22, 1999, PM men attacked a group f youngsters in Bovikkanam ho were taking out a peace-



ful march to the office of the Plantation Corporation of Kerala (PCK) in protest against the aerial spraying of endosulfan. They beat up the youths telling them that if endosulfan was not sprayed on the PCK plantations, cashew crops would dry up

and, consequently, the workers, most of whom belong to the CITU, would be thrown out of jobs. The incident had hogged media headlines then.

V S Achuthanandan became the Opposition Leader following the election in 2001 when the UDF came to power with K R Gowri, the bete noire of Achuthanandan, as Agriculture Minister.

Achuthanandan visited the endosulfan-affected vil- lages soon after becoming the Opposition Leader. He visited the houses of victims

in the villages of Swarga and Padre and came to the Vani- nagar School to meet a group of differently-abled chil- dren.

Achuthanandan was not convinced of the sight he saw — that the children were the victims of endosulfan use. He called aside an anti-en- dosulfan activist and dis- cussed the issue with him on the ground of Vaninagar School. Later, he told media- persons that all were victims of endosulfan and that the UDF Govt was not doing anything to rehabilitate the victims. Even then, he did

not utter a word about han- jing the pesticide.

In fact, Raju Narayanas- wami, the then District Col- lector, had sent a proposal to the govt to rehabilitate the endosulfan victims. But both the LDF and the UDF Govts sat on the file, ultimately re- jecting his proposal. "I sent the proposal to rehabilitate them on humanitarian grounds," he had told this reporter then. According to him, the tragedy of the peo- ple suffering from various diseases was real, whether they were the victims of en- dosulfan or not.

28/4/11 NIG
Centre blamed for turning a blind eye to Insecticides Act

T'Puram: Agriculture Min- ister Mullaikkara Ratsnakaran said that the Centre was turning a blind eye towards state's request to devolve power to act on harmful pes- ticides by bringing changes to the Insecticides Act, 1968.

Speaking at a seminar or- ganised by Department of Agriculture and Farm Infor- mation Bureau here on Wednesday to discuss alter- natives for endosulfan, the Minister said that the cur-

rent ban on the pesticide in the state was forced by a court order.

He said that Karnataka banned the pesticide with the limited powers vested with the states by which the ban will have to be renewed after every 60 days.

As a Minister, he had written to the Centre six times seeking to bring in relevant changes to the Act for which he had not re- ceived any response, he said.



Additional Chief Secretary and Agriculture Production Commissioner K Jayakumar having a word with Agriculture Minister Mullaikkara Ratsnakaran at a seminar to discuss safe alterna- tives for endosulfan organised by Department of Agriculture and Farm Information Bureau in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday | Express

Mullaikkara said that the Centre was clinging to silly arguments saying that only two states were seeking a ban on the pesticide and there was no alternative to endosulfan.

Additional Chief Secre- tary and Agriculture Pro- duction Commissioner K Jayakumar, who spoke on the occasion, said that it was the motto of the state that development should not be at the cost of human beings and nature. — ESS

The Indian EXPRESS

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ENDOSULFAN BAN

VS Seeks Support of Other CMs

T'Puram: Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan has sought the support of all other Chief Ministers to exert pressure on the Centre for banning endosulfan.

In letters sent to the chief ministers of other states, Achuthanandan stressed the need for standing united in the fight against the dreaded pesticide, which has caused immense harm in Kerala. He urged other Chief Ministers to exert pressure on the Central Government for taking a stand against endosulfan at the Stockholm conference which will conclude on April 29.

Achuthanandan listed out the details of the sufferings of the people of Kasargod from the use of endosulfan. After realising the

from the use of endosulfan, over 80 countries have banned it. However, the Indian Government was still taking an adamant stand against the ban even though Kerala had living examples of those suffering from the use of pesticide, he said.

Instead of losing time on further studies, Kerala had demanded an immediate ban on endosulfan for which the state required the support of all the other states in the country.

Along with the letter, Achuthanandan also sent the details of the study report which revealed the dreaded side-effects of endosulfan. He also explained the steps taken by the State Government to help endosulfan vic-

Express News Service

T'Puram: It was not clear if the children recognised the gravity of the word 'endosulfan' as they sang with the teacher. It was a musical presentation organised by Kerala Gandhi Smarak Nidhi on Thursday against the pesticide in support of the protests raging throughout the State. But as they recited the song, they seemed to realise that it was putting many children like them in high danger.

The children, some 45 of them, were at the Gandhi Bhavan as part of a summer camp being organised there and which had kicked off early this month. The National Service Scheme (NSS)



Kema singing out the song to the children (EXPRESS)

Programme coordinator at Sri Soathi Thiruvai Mool College, Renu, recited lines from a poem written by Ad- vocate Subudhakar on the endosulfan issue.

As she rendered the poem, the students sang along. She then chose one

boy from the group as the lead and the students were then made to sing the song along with animated movements. According to M M Unmar, Gandhi Bhavan's programme coordinator, the musical presentation was to make the children aware of the problem in a faraway place from their health of a future generation there.

The programme was inaugurated by Gandhi Smarak Nidhi working chairman N Radhakrishnan. Gandhi Bhavan secretary V Ramdas, programme coordinator V Sukun- ras and joint secretary N Nandakuttan Nair also were present.



Members of Theeradesa Balavedi, a feeder organisation of Kerala Swathanthra Malsya Thozhilali Federation, displaying postcards in which they had written the demand to ban endosulfan, in front of the Secretariat on Thursday. Hundreds of postcards were despatched to the Prime Minister later | Express

DYFI plans protests against Centre's stand

T'Puram: After Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan and his Cabinet colleagues observed a day-long fast against Centre's stand on endosulfan issue, the Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) is set to carry forward the protest march.

The DYFI will hold a one-day fast on May 5 in front of the Hindustan Insecticides

Limited at Eloor, the public sector company which manufactures the pesticide. The fast will ensure participation by noted personalities in the political, cultural and literature fields. DYFI state secretary TV Rajesh said here the other day.

The programme titled 'strike for survival', will begin on May 1 from Kasargod,

where 'fire of protest' will be handed over to DYFI state secretary T V Rajesh and DYFI state president M B Rajesh MP, in the presence of endosulfan victims. The rally will be accorded reception at various centres en route such as Kanhangad, Payyanur, Taliparamba, Kannur, Koyilandi, Kozhikode, Edappal, Kunnam-

kulam, Thrissur, Chalakkudi and Angamaly.

The DYFI will also hold protest in Delhi on June 5 on the issue. "A people's tribunal will also held on that day. The DYFI is willing to work with any youth organisation which has a similar stand on the matter," T V Rajesh said.

ENS

THE HINDU

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Contact Group recommends global ban on endosulfan

If enforced, ban will cover technical endosulfan, its isomers and endosulfan sulphate

Roy Mathew

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Contact Group on endosulfan and new persistent organic pollutants to the Stockholm Convention, meeting in Geneva, finalised a draft decision proposing global ban on endosulfan with many exemptions on Thursday.

The draft will now go to the conference of parties for approval. If approved, the ban will cover technical endosulfan, its related isomers and endosulfan sulphate (one of the degradation products of endosulfan). Exemptions are proposed for use against specified pests in cotton, jute, coffee, tea, tobacco, coriander, beans, tomatoes, okra, eggplant, onion, potato, chillies, apple,

- Five years to enforce ban; exemptions proposed against pests in cotton, jute, coffee, tea etc
- This would mean the pesticide would still be allowed to be used for several crops in India

mango, gram, arhar, maize, rice, wheat, groundnut and mustard.

Exemptions

This would mean that endosulfan will be allowed to be used for several of the crops in India, as wanted by the Indian delegation. Their use would be mainly against aphids in most crops besides several specified pests such as bollworms in cotton, berry borers and stem borers in coffee and a host of insects in tea.

Exemptions have even been proposed for use of endosulfan for hopper and fruit flies in mango and several pests in tomatoes. (They are not generally recommended in India). Countries will have five years to implement the ban as per terms of the treaty. The conference is also working on improving the compliance mechanism for banned persistent organic pollutants and financial assistance to developing countries and countries with

economies in transition to meet the treaty obligations.

India: need for safe, cost-effective options

Aarti Dhar writes from New Delhi

India on Thursday told the sixth meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC) of the Stockholm Convention going on at Geneva it would not prevent an international consensus on banning of endosulfan pesticide as long as the its interests were protected and concerns reflected in the final decision.

"We have to appear constructive and sensitive even as we fight for our national interest," Union Minister of State for Environment and

Forests Jairam Ramesh said here.

While most of the governments represented at the Stockholm Convention are in favour of a global ban on endosulfan, India is opposing it on the ground that it has no alternative available. And in case of a global ban, an alternative has to be provided.

Concern

"There is no support at all for delaying or deferring a decision. However, our concern is that cost-effective and safe alternatives need to be identified has been accepted and the consensus that has emerged is on listing endosulfan but exemptions allowed for crop-pest combinations," he said.

All exemptions sought by the Indian delegation are being included in the final decision. These are valid for 5 years, with provision for renewal for another 5 years. The listing takes one year to become effective. This effectively means a phase-out over 11 years.

"Taking note of our concern that work on identifying safe, cost-effective alternatives is necessary to facilitate phase-out, a decision will simultaneously be adopted asking the Technical POPRC to undertake this work and report to COP," the Minister said.

"We, of course, have the option to ratify this decision if and when we choose to do so, given the terms of our accession to this Convention," Mr. Ramesh added. Such a decision will be subject to Cabinet approval.

Kerala has been strongly demanding a nation-wide ban on endosulfan as it has been claimed that over 500 people have died and the health of thousands others adversely impacted due to the harmful effects of the pesticide. Some districts of Karnataka adjoining Kasargod — the most affected district in Kerala — have also reported harmful effects of endosulfan. These two States have already banned endosulfan. Meanwhile, Mohammed Ashraf of Kerala's Health Services, who is attending the conference as an independent observer, has sent a communication to the

Kerala Health Minister P. K. Sureshbabu, mentioning instances of the representatives of organisations of the pesticide industry, present at the conference as observers, influencing the Indian delegation to the conference. "The Indian delegates are just following their bosses' in the pesticide industry," he criticised.

Health impact

The government has already asked the Indian Council for Medical Research to conduct a study on the impact of endosulfan on human health, and will await its report before taking a final decision. All earlier committees have recommended against a ban.

"Spraying of Endosulfan State-sponsored crime"

Roy Mathew

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: A rapid assessment of the effects of Endosulfan on cashew plantations, ecology, biodiversity and the people in Kasargod, conducted by N.S. Vijayan of Sidan Ali Foundation, has summarised that the human sufferings and loss of biodiversity caused by the aerial spraying of Endosulfan by the State-owned Plantation Corporation of Kerala in Kasargod district would qualify as "State-sponsored crime".

The study said the State was duty-bound to provide total support to the victims for life or till they recovered completely and could earn a living.

It proposed that a team of doctors along with a committed social worker and ward member concerned should conduct a thorough survey of the victims to ascertain their numbers and the category of health issue and decide on the kind of remedial measures.

The survey should cover the 11 panchayat areas where Endosulfan was sprayed, as well as the adjacent panchayats from where the effects of the pesticide had been reported. The impact of Endosulfan, if any, on the reported alarming decline in the population of Korga — a primitive tribal community in Kasargod — should be verified during the survey and steps taken to treat and protect them.

The team, led by Dr. Vijayan, proposed that a rehabilitation centre with modern facilities for treatment of all the victims of Endosulfan be established. A satellite rehabilitation centre could be opened in each panchayat region so as to make accessibility easy. The victims can prefer to undergo treatment under allopathy, Ayurveda, Siddha, or other branches of medicine. Further, a system should be



Indian delegates at the conference of parties to the Stockholm Convention meeting in Geneva. — PHOTO BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

established to physically support the invalid victims at their homes. The victims should be offered appropriate occupation depending on their physical and mental condition, not primarily for income generation but for keeping them engaged. Monetary support to the victim's family should be provided on a monthly basis. As most of the families of victims had borrowed money from local moneylenders at extremely high interest rates for their treatment, a one-time waiver of loans should be considered. The study also suggested that each panchayat could be allotted 20 to 25 acres of land from the Corporation for setting up vegetable gardens and the same could be used as demonstration and extension centres of organic farming involving all stakeholders and beneficiaries, preferably families of victims. It recommended that rehabilitation centres and other support mechanisms to the victims and their families should be run by an independent society. Its members should include family members of the victims, local panchayat member and president, block panchayat members from the respective area, and the district panchayat president.

Order to take over PCK land

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Minister for Forests Benoy Vitharan has given directions to take over 284.43 hectares of leased forest land from the State-owned Plantation Corporation of Kerala (PCK) in Kasargod and distribute it to the victims of Endosulfan.

In a note to the Principal Secretary (Forests), the Minister observed that the corporation had breached lease conditions regarding

the Rajapuram estate. Hence, the land being taken over should be used for the rehabilitation of the victims, and clearance for that under the Forest (Conservation) Act should be sought urgently from the Centre, he said.

The Rajapuram estate. Hence, the land being taken over should be used for the rehabilitation of the victims, and clearance for that under the Forest (Conservation) Act should be sought urgently from the Centre, he said.

Sugathakumari finds fault with farmers too

Centre's stand on Endosulfan criticised

Staff Reporter

KOZHIKODE: Social activist Sugathakumari has said that some farmers in the State too are guilty of the "reckless and secret" use of dangerous pesticides, including Endosulfan, concealing its after-effect on the poor people.

She was inaugurating an open discussion on the impact of Endosulfan organised by the Paristhithi Samrakshana Samithi at the Sports Council Hall here on Thursday.

Meaningless attempt

Condemning such acts, Ms. Sugathakumari said the attempt to put the blame solely on the authorities concerned would be meaningless.

She said there were farmers who knowingly served "poisonous products" with a view to making instant profit.

She criticised the Union government for its pro-Endosulfan stance. She said the Centre was bowing to the pressures of the pesticide lobby.

"I feel ashamed of my country which cold-shouldered the interests of its citizens for pleasing the influential pesticide manufacturers," she said.

Ms. Sugathakumari said many political parties were senselessly quarrelling over the issue only to gain political mileage.

No faith in parties

"We have hardly any trust in political parties or the government that they will come out with a stern decision to settle the issue," she said. According to Ms. Sugathakumari, the government has hoodwinked the people by asking for more evidence to prove the consequences of Endosulfan on human beings and nature.

- 'Centre bowing to the pressures of pesticide lobby'
- 'Political parties senselessly fighting over the issue'

Ms. Sugathakumari called upon the people to air their protest against the government to meet their actual demand on the issue.

"It has already been proved that peaceful protests have no role in influencing the government to take a logical decision. It is time we opted for more forceful methods to correct this arrogance," she said.

Ms. Sugathakumari called upon the people to air their protest against the government to meet their actual demand on the issue.

'Avoid tragedies'

The government should open its eye to see the sufferings of the victims. It should also take steps to avoid such tragedies in the future, she said.

Environmental activist T. Shobendran said the practice of serving fatal pesticides in the name of farming development should be exposed.

"Generations will have to lament on their fate if such crooked attempts continue," Mr. Shobendran said.

Environmental activists Khadeja Mumtaz, T.V. Rajan, M.A. Johnson, Thayai Balan, and K.T.A. Azeem were present.

Protest in the gentle cadence of music



STRONG VOICES: Children participate in a music programme against Endosulfan organised by the Kerala Gandhi Smarak Nidhi in Thiruvananthapuram on Thursday. — PHOTO: C. RATHEESH KUMAR

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Children attending the ongoing vacation camp organised by the Kerala Gandhi Smarak Nidhi at Gandhi Bhavan here learnt what it means to lend their voice to a social cause on Thursday.

A music programme highlighting the impact of the deadly pesticide Endosulfan on humans was the highlight of the day at the camp. Rama, National Service Scheme programme coordinator at Sri Swathi Thiruvallur College of Music, scored the music for the lines penned by Subhuthkumar. The children recited the lines in chorus.

N. Radhakrishnan, working chairman of the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, inaugurated the programme. Secretary V. Ramdas, programme coordinator V. Sukumaran, and joint secretary N. Nanakutanan Nair were present.

THE HINDU

29 April 2011

Children rise against Endosulfan



FOR A HEALTHY FUTURE GENERATION: Children from the coastal belt in Thiruvananthapuram stage a demonstration in front of the Secretariat on Thursday, demanding a ban on Endosulfan.

— PHOTO: C. RATHEESH KUMAR.

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Children from the coastal areas of the city staged a demonstration and a dharna in front of the Secretariat here on Thursday urging the government to support the call for a ban on Endosulfan.

The agitation was organised by Theeradesa Balavadi, children's wing of the Kerala Swathantra Matsya Thozhilali Federation (KSMTF).

The children posted cards urging Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to declare a nationwide ban on the deadly pesticide that was responsible for human suffering in Kasaragod and other areas.

Inaugurating the dharna, KSMTF secretary Anto Elias said that by opposing a ban on Endosulfan, the Union gov-

ernment was going against popular sentiments.

KSMTF State committee member Maglene Peter said the federation would organise a mass movement demanding a ban on Endosulfan. She said women and children would be in the forefront of the agitation.

Ms. Peter said the residue of pesticides used by farmers in fields would find its way into the sea.

This would affect the fish stocks and pollute the marine environment.

She said this warranted a mass agitation to create awareness among the public of the harmful effects of the pesticide.

KSMTF leaders Pushparani, Jeremy Roy, Celin Antony, and Leelija Newton addressed the dharna.

11 August 2011

Endosulfan entangle: when pesticide turns pest

The government's argument in the court appears weak in science and perhaps strong in commerce

The Random House Dictionary of English Language defines the word 'cycle' as a person who believes that only selfishness motivates human actions and who disbelieves in or minimises selfless acts or disinterested points of view and 'ignoral' as showing contempt for accepted standards of honesty or morality.

The arguments

These definitions come to mind when one reads the arguments that the Central government has made before the Supreme Court of India on the issue of banning the pesticide endosulfan.

This is in response to a petition filed by the Democratic Youth Federation of India on the ill effects of endosulfan on the environment and human life, and that it should be banned. Reporting on the proceedings in the court, J. Venkatesan of The Hindu writes on August 28: "The Centre has said that long-term use of the pesticide was unlikely to present public

health concern. The Centre made it clear that endosulfan was not the reason behind health problems in Kasaragod in Kerala." The court asked the government to appoint a committee to look into the health issue and report.

This was done and The Hindu reports on August 6: "The committee's interim report said public health concerns of hazard associated with the pesticide was not reported from any state barring Kerala and Karnataka."

And the Centre maintained that, except in Kerala and Karnataka, no negative impact of this pesticide on crops, human and animal health or environment was reported anywhere and the ban should not be imposed in other states.

What is the truth?

Is the government correct? Are Kerala and Karnataka so different environmentally and geographically that they are the only areas where life forms were affected? Or is the argument based on the fact



TREADING CAREFULLY: On issues concerning health and public welfare, society generally adopts the cautionary principle. — PHOTO: R. ESWARRAJ

SPEAKING OF SCIENCE

that banning endosulfan will affect the market, where the actual value is Rs 270 crores? Three manufacturers (Hindustan Insecticides Ltd, Coimbatore; Fertilizers and Excel Crop Care) together produce about 8500 tonnes of endosulfan every year, amounting to 70 per cent of the world production.

In science, we look at and analyze all data available on a given issue, look for congruity and consistency between them and decide whether the information culled out of

them makes sense, or whether more research is needed in order to arrive at a rigorous conclusion. And on issues concerning health and public welfare, society generally adopts the cautionary principle.

Hence, let us look at what science has suggested so far or the effects of endosulfan on the environment and on life. Several comprehensive summaries are available free online, and are highly recommended: there is Wikipedia, on the topic of endosulfan,

with 94 references and licensed by Creative Commons. The other is an equally comprehensive summary, available at <http://www.pam.org/resources/specific-pesticides/endosulfan>

These reports not only describe the chronology of the endosulfan effects and the international efforts (WHO, Environmental Justice Foundation, Parties to the Rotterdam Convention) as well as reports from Indian government centres and industry groups.

Early report

The CSIR lab Industrial Toxicology Research Centre (ITRC), based in Lucknow came out with a report as early as 1960 (Toxicity Data Handbook, Vol III, Pesticide AD classifying endosulfan as extremely hazardous.

"The Final Report of The Investigation of Unusual Illnesses Allegedly Produced by Endosulfan Exposure in Padre Village of Kasaragod District, N. Kerala. NIOH Study" states that endosulfan exposure in early life may result in adverse health effects in later life.

What does current scientific literature say? A quick search in PubMed revealed

that (a) organochlorine pesticide residues (endosulfan, DDT, aldrin etc. were found in fresh and pasteurized cow's milk from Kampala market in Uganda (Chemosphere, August 2001); (b) endosulfan provokes systemic toxicity in the brains of rats (study from Greece in The Journal of Toxicological Sciences, April 2001); and (c) one from an ICAR lab in our own Andaman Islands, which reports in the June 2001 issue of Fish Physiology and Biochemistry that endosulfan exposure severely altered liver histology in fish.

The government's argument in the court thus appears weak in science and perhaps strong in commerce, of more on wealth than on health. Why also would the Agriculture Minister Pawan declare six months ago that India will not ban endosulfan?

The entire saga is eerily reminiscent of DDT, which was hailed as a wonder pesticide, and used effectively and successfully a generation ago. Its ill effects and health hazards came to light only later, and it is now banned the world over. Recall that DDT was first synthesized in 1874, but its insecticidal properties

came to light only in 1959 thanks to the German scientist Paul Mueller.

Its successful use during the II World War against mosquitoes was a huge success, and Mueller was awarded the 1948 Nobel Prize in Medicine.

Environmental havoc

Companies like Ciba, Olin Montanaro and Montross manufactured DDT in tons and tons. Then came Rachel Carson, who, in her "Silent Spring", catalogued the environmental havoc that DDT caused.

This triggered the Environmental Movement, and thanks to their efforts, DDT was banned for widespread use in 1972. With endosulfan the results have hit us in the face well ahead of time.

It was first manufactured in 1954, and its ill effects came to light by the 1990s. Its ban was imposed already by 2000, a full decade before today.

Let us use the cautionary principle and not commerce as priority, stop endosulfan and pursue research on safer alternatives. That would be the way of science.

D. BALASUBRAMANIAN
dbsci@rediffmail.com

UNKNOWN

Sudheeran Lambasts Pawar on Endosulfan Issue

T'Puram: Joining the anti-endosulfan campaign, which is gathering momentum, senior Congress leader V M Sudheeran has come down on Union Minister for Agriculture Sharad Pawar for his alleged stand favouring pesticide lobby.

Sudheeran told reporters here on Thursday that the Union Ministry of Agriculture was acting as if it was the brand ambassador of endosulfan. "If the Prime Minister did not rein in the Agriculture Minister, he would bring more embarrassment to the UPA Government than what was caused by former Telecom Minister A Raja in the 2G spectrum scam," Sudheeran said.

He said that it was quite puzzling that the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, which took proactive stands in most of the cases, was maintaining silence on the endosulfan issue.

Responding to a question whether it was the compulsions of coalition politics which stops the government



from controlling Pawar, Sudheeran said that he did not believe that Pawar was beyond all others. "No dictator can survive the public rage," Sudheeran said.

Sudheeran said that the Agriculture Minister's argument that endosulfan could not be banned in response to the demand from just two states was very strange. "Is the Agriculture Minister saying that the disaster needs to affect all the states

to ban this harmful chemical?" he asked. He said that the chemical BHC, which was banned in 1996-97, was not banned because all the states had asked for it.

He demanded that the Prime Minister should intervene at least in the last moment so that the country could take a stand against the pesticide at the Stockholm Convention which begins on April 25.

"The government says that the new committee, which studied the harmful effects of the pesticide, would return to the state after two months, which indicates that the country will defer the issue without taking any stand at the Stockholm Convention. This is a delaying tactics which is being pursued at the behest of the pesticide lobby," Sudheeran alleged.

“ IS THE AGRICULTURE MINISTER SAYING THAT THE DISASTER NEEDS TO AFFECT ALL THE STATES TO BAN THIS HARMFUL CHEMICAL?

THE HINDU

29 April 2012

Endosulfan issue: betrayal alleged

Pinarayi blames UDF government

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Communist Party of India (Marxist) State secretary Pinarayi Vijayan has accused the UDF government of having betrayed the people and the State by seeking to correct the study report on endosulfan issue "to suit the interests of endosulfan manufacturers."

In a statement here on Saturday, Mr. Vijayan alleged that the UDF government had sought changes in the report to subvert the considered stand of the Kerala Assembly and the Supreme Court in favour of banning endosulfan.

The government intervention had come even as efforts were on to secure adequate compensation for the endosulfan victims from the endosulfan manufacturing

companies. The government should order an investigation to find out who all had worked behind the move. Ministers and officials who were responsible for it should not be spared.

The government move, he said, showed that it had reached the conclusion that the report of the team of doctors from the Kozhikode medical college was incorrect. The community medicine department of the medical college had rejected the direction from the Health Secretary in this regard. It was a healthy sign that the doctors had chosen to stand firm on facts. The Oommen Chandy government's attempts to justify the endosulfan manufacturers at a time when protest against endosulfan was mounting across the globe was shameful, the CPI(M) leader said.

30 April 2012

Endosulfan: Rights panel summons Chief Secretary

For not paying compensation to the kin of the victims

Roy Mathew

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has asked Chief Secretary K. Jayakumar to appear personally before it on June 11, if the State government fails to take action on the compensation recommended for endosulfan victims in Kasaragod district.

The Chief Secretary should file an action-taken report on the commission's recommendations before June 4, failing which he will have to appear before it. The commission has warned that it will approach the Supreme Court for enforcement of its recommendations if the government fails to pay the compensation.

The commission has said that the State should pay at least Rs. 5 lakh to the next of kin of each of those who had died, those fully bedridden or unable to move without help or those mentally challenged and Rs. 3 lakh to those who have got other disabilities. A panel of doctor may assess the extent of physical disability to classify the categories of victims.

Though the commission has said that the Union government should give ade-

quate financial help to the State government, the Centre is yet to approve a proposal submitted by it. In fact, the projects proposed are being curtailed.

Recently, the State government issued an order taking over the liabilities of the Plantations Corporation of Kerala in this regard.

It was the corporation which undertook aerial spraying of endosulfan on its estates spreading across or adjoining a dozen villages in Kasaragod district, disregarding rules.

The spraying of endosulfan, which started in the late-1970s, had continued till 2000.

No Central aid

The commission, which considered the issue suo moto in 2010, gave its recommendation in December that year. Last year, the State government said in an action-taken report that the payments could not be made since assistance was not forthcoming from the Centre. More than 4,000 people have already been identified as vic-

tims eligible for relief, and a four-stage verification is on in case of 1,400 more applicants. The process includes medical examination by experts and confirmation of places of residence by the Revenue Department.

The commission has recommended that a panel of doctors may assess the extent of physical disability to classify the categories of victims. It has also called for a survey of other populations that may have been affected by the use of endosulfan, including in Palakkad, where there were reports of similar problems faced by villagers.

Besides, the commission has recommended an increase in the quantum of relief, rehabilitation for victims and their families, and improvement in facilities for diagnosis, treatment and therapy available at hospitals and health centres.

It also suggested that at least one of the hospitals attending to the victims should be equipped and staffed to offer advanced care and all primary health centres in the 11 villages where people are seriously affected may be upgraded to community health centres.

RSP seeks clarification

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Revolutionary Socialist Party has demanded that the government clarify its interest behind the Health Secretary's letter to the Community Medicine Wing of the Government Medical College, Kozhikode, seeking a review of its study on the health effects of endosulfan under pressure from endosulfan manufacturers.

Party general secretary A.A. Asree said that every disclosure coming out after the United Democratic Front government came to power showed anti-people tendencies.

They included the endosulfan issue, move to allot land belonging to the University of Calicut to private trusts, government action favouring Italian marines accused of murder and proposals on power tariff.

THE HINDU

03 May 2012

07 May 2012

Endosulfan victims to get compensation

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Chief Minister Oommen Chandy reiterated here on Wednesday that the government would pay the compensation recommended by the National Human Rights Commission to the endosulfan victims in Kasaragod district.

Speaking to the media after a meeting of the Cabinet, the Chief Minister said that the Chief Secretary had been asked to examine all sides of the issue and submit a report for consideration of the Cabinet next week.

The government was examining whether the manufacturers and suppliers of endosulfan could be held liable to pay the compensation. Payment could not be made earlier, as there was no positive response from the Centre regarding financial contribution, Mr. Chandy said.

Reports denied
Mr. Chandy said Health Department officials had acted rightly over the legal notice received from S. Ganesan representing endosulfan manufacturers. Media reports saying that the department had sought amendments to the epidemiological studies done by the Community Medicine Department of Kozhikode Medical College was contrary to facts. The Department had, in fact, declined to accept Mr. Ganesan's suggestions and had closed the matter.

He recalled that Mr. Ganesan had sent letters to the Community Medicine Department saying that there were serious errors in the

studies which should be corrected. He had subsequently issued a legal notice to the Principal Secretary (Health) upon his not getting any response from the medical college. The Principal Secretary sought the advice of the Law Department, and after receiving the advice, wrote to the Head of the Community Medicine Department seeking his opinion on the request of Mr. Ganesan to convene a meeting to discuss the matter. He also requested the head of the department to 'report whether there is any impediment in accepting suggestions, if any, from Mr. Ganesan for curing the defect, if any, in the report already prepared and to make it fool proof.'

The head of the department replied that there was no need to hold a meeting or accept Mr. Ganesan's suggestions. The findings of the studies were reviewed by scientific bodies and the Joint Expert Committee of the Supreme Court on Endosulfan.

The government's decision was communicated to the lawyer of Mr. Ganesan on April 2 this year as follows: 'I am to invite your attention to the reference cited and to inform you that [the] Government is not in favour of convening a meeting with Sri S. Ganesan nor accepting any suggestion from Sri S. Ganesan regarding the study since the studies are already reviewed by the apex scientific body, the Indian Council of Medical Research, National Institute of Medical Statistics and the Supreme Court.'

Expert Committee Endosulfan.

Endosulfan detoxification giving headache to State

1,950 litres remaining unused at various estates of Plantation Corporation

K.P.M. Basheer

KOCHI: Containing the unused endosulfan stocks with the Plantation Corporation of Kerala (PCK) is causing headache to the State government because of people's objection even as Hindustan Insecticide Limited (HIL) is taking steps to 'detoxify' the stocks using a Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) technology.

There are some 1,950 litres of obsolete endosulfan stocks remaining unused at various PCK estates, mainly in Kasaragod district. The State government had asked the public-sector HIL to help destroy the unused stocks. HIL had, before the ban in Kerala, been the only public sector company in the country manufacturing endosulfan.

An HIL source told *The Hindu* that initially the company had wanted to take the PCK stocks to the HIL plant at Udyogamandal near here for detoxification.

Since the Eloor municipality and local residents opposed this, HIL was now

- HIL taking steps to 'detoxify' the stocks
- DRDO's technology to be used

planning to do it on-site on the PCK plantations. Agriculture Minister K.P. Mohanan will be holding talks with local residents and local body representatives in Kasaragod on April 30 and at Mannarkad in Palakkad district on May 6 to get their approval for the detoxification on the PCK estates. Recently, the government's talks with people's representatives in Kannur had hit roadblocks.

Court's query

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Central government to explain how it intended to destroy the unused and unused endosulfan stocks in the country in the wake of the ban on the manufacture, sale, and use of the highly toxic and environmentally damaging chemical. The court directive was on a petition by private endosulfan manufacturers who wanted

the court to allow them to sell off the remaining stocks to farmers in India as there was no export market in view of the ban by the Stockholm Convention. The PCK stocks are nearly a decade old. In the past, the PCK used to spray endosulfan on its cashew plantations, but following the 2004 State government ban on its use, 1,950 litres of the pesticide has been kept in the PCK warehouses.

The PCK's aerial spray of endosulfan at Enmakaje and other villages in Kasaragod district had caused widespread health risks there. The anti-endosulfan campaign in Kerala and other parts of the world had finally led to the worldwide ban on the chemical by the Stockholm Convention.

DRDO technology

C. Jankumar, director of the Thanal environmental or-

ganisation which has led a long campaign against endosulfan and other POPs (persistent organic pollutants), told *The Hindu* that the DRDO technology the HIL would be using was an old one.

This consisted of hydrolysis of endosulfan which would produce endosulfan diol, which in turn would be burnt. The process was not free from environmental damage. There was a non-combustion technology available in Australia, he noted. Mr. Jayakumar said there could be illegal endosulfan stocks in Kerala — with dealers and farmers. He pointed out that when Kerala banned endosulfan, many tea estates had surreptitiously bought endosulfan from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Such stocks also should be unearthed and detoxified.

Endosulfan is 'cheaper to buy, costlier to destroy.' Detoxification of one litre would cost up to Rs.4,000. Before Tamil Nadu banned endosulfan a few months back, the pesticide used to be sold for around Rs.300 a litre.

The Indian EXPRESS

03 May 2012

Govt Mulling Claiming Compensation from Endosulfan Manufacturers

Express News Service

T'Puram: The State Government is looking into the possibility of claiming compensation from endosulfan manufacturers, Chief Minister Oommen Chandy said here on Wednesday.

Chandy told a post-Cabinet briefing that the Chief Secretary had been asked to study the matter and submit a report by next week.

Chandy termed 'baseless and unfortunate' a recent visual media report which said that the health principal



secretary had ordered a meeting to be convened with an endosulfan representative on the endosulfan report prepared by the Community Medicine Department of the Kozhikode Medical College. The health principal sec-

CHANDY TOLD A POST-CABINET BRIEFING THAT THE CHIEF SECRETARY HAD BEEN ASKED TO STUDY THE MATTER AND SUBMIT A REPORT BY NEXT WEEK

retary had not issued orders for any such meeting, but merely sought the opinion of the Community Medicine Department after Ganesan,

the endosulfan representative, had issued a legal notice. The government official was, in fact, passing on the legal advice given by the Law Department, the Chief Minister said. The government had informed Ganesan that the government was not in favour of a meeting with him or accepting any of his suggestions for amending the report. The UDF Government's stand on the endosulfan issue is transparent. The government will not compromise on this issue, Chandy said.

THE HINDU

20 May 2012

Panel to submit action plan

Problems of endosulfan victims at Chakkittappara grama panchayat

Staff Reporter

KOZHIKODE: An expert panel constituted by the State government to study the problems of endosulfan victims at Chakkittappara grama panchayat completed their two-day visit to the region on Saturday.

The six-member team would submit a detailed action plan to the District Collector based on their studies and to take an appropriate action for the rehabilitation of the victims in the area.

K.M. Sreekumar, one of the panel members, said there would be measures on the part of government to con-

duct more in-depth studies about the health of employees who retired from service from the Chembanod estate of the Kerala Plantation Corporation (PCK), where endosulfan was used. Details of all the people who were claimed to be victims of endosulfan would be collected from the region for follow up action, he said.

The panel would also collect reports about the health condition of people living in the neighbouring panchayats of Chakkittappara for a comparative analysis. Action plan would be prepared soon after getting the comparative study report with the support of the

medical department.

The panel was constituted following reports that the use of endosulfan in the region had badly affected the health of the people and paved the way for an increase in strange diseases.

Evidence collection

The team members headed by Naseema Beevi from the Vellayani Agriculture College and Samuel Mathew from the Aromatic and Medicinal Plant Research Station, Ernakulam, visited the spots and collected evidences from the victims.

Deputy Director of Agriculture P.K. Mohammed, Assist-

ant Director R. Bindu, Chakkittappara panchayat president K. Sunil, Anti-endosulfan Action Committee convener O.D. Thomas, and village officers were with the team during their visit to the location and to the house of six victims.

The team members, who examined in detail all the survey reports prepared by the District Medical Officer and the then Collector on the issue, also gathered details of various pesticides used in the PCK estates during the last 30 years. They met in person the Assistant Director of the PCK at Perambra to get more scientific evidences.

The Indian EXPRESS

17 May 2012

Detoxification of Endosulfan to Begin on June 2

Kasargod: The detoxification of endosulfan stored at three godowns of the Plantation Corporation will begin on June 2. The process, beginning with the repacking of the pesticide in safe barrels, will be finished by June 8.

The steel barrels containing endosulfan at Cheemeni, Periya and Rajapuram godowns have rusted which made it necessary to transfer the pesticide to high-density polyethylene barrels.

The Endosulfan Cell Committee has drafted the procedures for the second and third phases of detoxifica-

tion. The transfer process would be telecast live. Repacked endosulfan would be transferred to Periya as it is recommended by a study team led by NRHM Coordinator Dr Asheel. The talks with the residents would be held at Periya and Cheemeni on May 22 and at Kallar on May 24.

A steering committee has been formed to monitor the detoxification process with Agriculture Minister KP Mohan as Chairman and District Collector V N Jeethendran as convener. A sum of ₹5 lakh is the estimated expenditure for the process.

THE HINDU

12 June 2012

13 June 2012

State charts relief plan

Assistance to be paid to endosulfan victims

J. Balaji

NEW DELHI: Acting on an order of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to pay compensation to the families of those who died from the effects of endosulfan and those living with disabilities, the Kerala government has submitted a report in partial compliance with the order issued on December 31, 2010.

The government has said in the report that of the Rs. 5 lakh ordered as compensation for those bedridden or amputee, Rs. 3 lakh will be paid in two instalments of Rs. 1.5 lakh each and the balance Rs. 2 lakh will be considered a deposit and the beneficiary paid Rs. 2,000 a month for five years as returns.

The lump sum will be paid later, the government said.

In two instalments

The commission, accepting the proposal, has asked the government to make the payments in a similar manner to the families of those who died.

As regards payment of the Rs. 3 lakh recommended for other disabled persons, the commission agreed with the government's submission that Rs. 2 lakh will be disbursed in two instalments and Rs. 1 lakh treated as de-

posit and the beneficiary paid Rs. 1,000 a month for five years as returns. After five years, the lump sum will be paid.

The State government has submitted a detailed account of the measures taken to provide diagnostic and health-

care facilities and rehabilitation and welfare measures to the victims in the affected panchayats of Kasaragod district.

The commission has directed the government to give a report in eight weeks on the payments made.

Protesters to meet Chief Minister today

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: The Endosulfan Satyagraha Samithi received no categorical assurances on its demands at a meeting with District Collector V.N. Jithendran here on Monday as a relay strike by mothers of endosulfan victims organised by it entered the 53rd day.

The samithi members will meet Chief Minister Oommen Chandy in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday in this connection. The organisation has warned of an indefinite hunger strike from Saturday if the government gives no firm assurances.

At the meeting with the Collector, its members

aired apprehensions over the delay in financial and medical assistance and steps to initiate a comprehensive rehabilitation package.

The district administration confirmed to have received Rs. 27 crore as first instalment of compensation from the Plantation Corporation of Kerala, whose aerial spraying of endosulfan in 11 panchayats in the district led to the trauma, to pay compensation ordered by the National Human Rights Commission to the families of the dead and those living with disabilities. The would ensure coordinated relief measures, Ambalathara Kunhikrishnan, convener of the samithi, said.

Chandy promises to look into problems of endosulfan victims

No assurance on demand to write off bank loans

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: Chief Minister Oommen Chandy on Tuesday assured the Endosulfan Satyagraha Samithi that steps would be taken to address the problems faced by those suffering from mysterious diseases attributed to the spraying of the pesticide in the district.

An eight-member team of the samithi, accompanied by four MLAs from the district, held talks with Mr. Chandy and KPCC president Ramesh Chennithala in Thiruvananthapuram on some crucial issues, including the need for swift implementation of the relief and rehabilitation package for the victims.

The samithi members said no assurance was given on the demand to write off bank loans taken by the victims' families.

The relay indefinite agitation by mothers of the endosulfan victims would be intensified into a hunger

strike from June 16, samithi convener Ambalathara Kunhikrishnan told *The Hindu* from the State capital.

The final decision to intensify the agitation would be taken at a meeting here on Wednesday. The indefinite relay strike entered 54th day on Tuesday.

No concrete assurance was given on the demand to waive loans amounting to Rs.50 crore taken from nationalised and cooperative banks by the families of the endosulfan victims, mostly to meet the latter's medical expenses.

Stating that it was difficult for the government to write off the loans, Mr. Chandy asked the members to make use of the relief package suggested by the National Human Rights Commission for the victims.

The government, in principle, had agreed to partially disburse the NHRC-recommended relief package, Rs.5 lakh each to the kin of the deceased and Rs.3 lakh to

those afflicted with serious ailments, for the victims, E. Chandrasekharan, MLA, who was present at the meeting, said. The samithi members were assured that the victims would be provided free treatment facilities at hospitals in Mangalore in view of the acute shortage of doctors at many government hospitals.

Only 58 of the 114 posts of doctors in government hospitals could be filled as many were are not inclined to work in the northern district, said Mr. Chandrasekharan.

The government also would take steps to ensure availability of medicines and facility to transport patients from remote hamlets to the recommended hospitals.

MLAs N.A. Nellikunnu, P.B. Abdul Razak, and K. Kunhiraman (Thiruvananthapuram) attended the meeting. Mr. Kunhikrishnan said, adding that they would meet Leader of the Opposition V.S. Achuthanandan to draw his attention to the issue.

18 June 2012

Endosulfan detoxification begins

Operation Blossom Spring first taken up at Periyar

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: Authorities started the process of detoxifying endosulfan stocked in three warehouses of the Plantation Corporation of Kerala here on Sunday.

Operation Blossom Spring was first taken up at the warehouse at Periyar, transferring 914.55 litres of the pesticide in six corroded barrels to high-density polyethylene barrels.

A team of personnel from Hindustan Insecticide Ltd. and the Kerala State Pollution Control Board and medical experts did the highly delicate transfer.

The two-phase process of detoxification is expected to allay the fear of the people that the remaining stock of the pesticide, blamed for deaths and debilitating diseases in villages where the corporation used to aerially spray it on cashew estates, will cause more health and environmental hazards.

In the next two days, around 650 litres of the pesticide in four barrels on the Rajapuram estate of the corporation at Panathady and 73.75 litres in its Cheemeni warehouse will be transferred to safe barrels.

At Periyar, Fire and Rescue Services and police personnel stood guard as people gath-



KILLING A POISON: Experts trying to transfer endosulfan from corroded barrels to new vessels in a warehouse at Periyar in Kasaragod on Sunday.

ered to witness the operation. LCD screens were put in place for those outside to watch the process.

The area around the warehouse has been categorised into three zones - red zone up to three metres, yellow zone up to another five metres and green zone the adjoining 10 metres.

An amount of Rs. 5 lakh has been sanctioned for the safe disposal of the pesticide in the three warehouses, Agriculture Minister K. P. Mohanan had told presspersons here on Saturday.

The corporation had carried out the aerial spraying twice a year from 1978 to 2001 on its cashew estates in 11

panchayat limits. A court in Kanhangad banned it followed by the Kerala High Court in 2003.

However, the unutilised stock of around 1,600 litres has been kept in the three warehouses. The prolonged storage began to corrode the barrels, causing fear.

17 June 2012

DETOXIFICATION

Endosulfan to be Transferred to Safe Barrels Today

Express News Service

Kasargod: The endosulfan stored at the Plantation Corporation's godowns at Cheemeni, Rajapuram and Periya will be transferred to safe barrels for detoxification on Sunday, said Minister for Agriculture K P Mohanan at a press conference here on Saturday.

The minister said that the endosulfan was being transferred to safe barrels as the first phase of the detoxification process. He also informed that this was the first time that an organised procedure had been undertaken for the detoxification of a pesticide in the country. The detoxification has been named as 'Blossom Spring', he added.

He also said that the endosulfan package recommended by the Human Rights Commission would be delivered soon. Out of the ₹5 lakh compensation for the bedridden and the kin of dead persons, ₹3 lakh would be disbursed at the earliest and the remaining ₹2 lakh would be deposited in their accounts as fixed deposit. The compensation for the physically challenged would also be paid in the same manner, ₹2 lakh would be paid first and remaining ₹1 lakh would be deposited in bank, he added.

The district has 4,880 enlisted victims of endosulfan tragedy. Around 567 victims are bedridden and as much as 734 deaths have been registered so far.

18 June 2012

OPERATION BLOSSOM SPRING

914.55 Litres of Endosulfan Transferred to HDPE Barrels

Express News Service

Kasargod: The first phase of the operation 'Blossom Spring' (endosulfan detoxification process) started at the Plantation Corporation's godown in Periya here on Sunday.

The task force entrusted with the work including experts, medics and other officials reached the spot early in the morning and started the procedure at around 11am and continued till 4:30pm.

As much as 914.55 litres of Endosulfan was stored here in six barrels. It took around 45 minutes to pump out the content of each barrel to UN-approved high-density poly-



Endosulfan stored at Plantation Corporation's godown at Periya being transferred to HDPE barrels on Sunday

ethylene (HDPE) barrels.

A team led by HIL production manager P Santhosh and Venugopal of R&D Department transferred the pesticide to new barrels. The contaminated items including the soil from the spot where leakage had happened, and equipment used for the purpose were also kept in a barrel so there were total seven barrels which were sealed at the end.

According to Dr Asheel Mohammed, who is the member of the team that submitted the detailed procedure for detoxification, one of the barrels was lying on the floor and the color of the content inside have changed. The endosulfan,

when mixed with the soil, can produce a few toxic substances such as endosulfate. That is why the soil was also taken for further tests, said Asheel. According to experts, the leakage from the barrel was only inside the godown.

Sample was collected from each barrel by the Pollution Control Board representatives and HIL. The results of both agencies established by gas chromatography test on these samples will decide the further process in detoxification and final disposal, which will be done with the help of Kerala Enviro Infrastructure Ltd.

According to Dr Asheel, five mild steel barrels were

crushed using JCB to extract the endosulfan that was solidified due to prolonged storage. The plastic barrel was cut to extract the same. The solid endosulfan has been stored in safe HDPE barrels.

Elaborate safety arrangements were done with fire force, emergency medical team and police at the spot.

The surroundings of the godown was categorised into three zones namely, red, yellow and green. Around 43 safety equipment were used during the process by the experts.

The process was monitored by the experts. State Pollution Control Board environmental assistant engi-

neer Abdul Rahman is entrusted with the environmental safety monitoring. Dr Syro Philip of Alappuzha Medical College is taking care of public health safety measures while a team led by Stockholm Convention observer C Jayakumar took the responsibility of community monitoring.

The same procedure will be followed at Rajapuram on Monday and at Cheemeni on Tuesday.

Deputy Collector Sudheer Babu, Sub-Collector P Balakrishnan and endosulfan rehabilitation nodal officer facilitated the process. MLA F Chandrasekharan also visited the site during the process.

THE HINDU

19 June 2012

More endosulfan transferred

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: Operation Blossom Spring, into its second day on Monday, succeeded in transferring 645 litres of endosulfan kept in corroded barrels in a warehouse to safe vessels on the Rajapuram estate of the Plantation Corporation of Kerala at Panathur, some 40 km from Kanhangad, on Monday.

The operation to detoxify

the endosulfan stock in three warehouses of the corporation in the district had started on Sunday, with 914.55 litres transferred to new vessels at Periyar.

The expert team from Hindustan Insecticides Ltd. and the Kerala State Pollution Control Board, supervised by medical experts, took safety steps following U.N. guidelines, wearing full-face masks equipped with self-contained

breathing apparatuses.

The personnel transferred the pesticide kept in four rusted barrels to high-density polyethylene barrels. The corroded vessels were crushed and packed in plastic bags, along with the mud on which they were kept, for taking them out of the district.

The authorities will now move to Cheemeni to transfer 74 litres of the pesticide into fresh barrels on Tuesday.

20 June 2012

Endosulfan gets a 'makeover' at PCK estate

73.75 litres condense to 10 kg, bulk either evaporated or leaked out

C.S. Narayanan Kutty

KASARAGOD: Raising environmental and health concerns, officials repacking endosulfan in fresh vessels have found that the pesticide has either leaked out or evaporated from a corroded barrel kept at the Plantation Corporation of Kerala's (PCK) Cheemeni estate.

It came to the notice of the officials of the Pollution Control Board, Hindustan Insecticide Ltd., medical team, and the taskforce appointed by the district administration when they started to repack the banned pesticide on day three of 'Operation Blossom Spring' at the PCK warehouse at Cheemeni, located in the southern part of the district, on Tuesday.

According to the data available with the officials, the Cheemeni estate had a stock of 73.75 litres of the "killer" pesticide.

To their surprise, the officials found that bulk of the pesticide either got evaporated or leaked out of the rusted barrel in which the pesticide



DETOXIFICATION PROCESS: Personnel transferring endosulfan from corroded barrels as part of 'Operation Blossom Spring' at the Plantation Corporation of Kerala's Cheemeni estate in Kasaragod on Tuesday.

had been kept since 2003, when it was banned following a ruling of the Kerala High Court.

The personnel could find just 10 kg of condensed form of the pesticide in the corroded barrels as they painstaking-

ly cleared contaminated soil, logs, and other items inside the warehouse and stocked them in five UN-approved high density polyethylene barrels, Mohammed Asheel, taskforce convener of the operation, told *The Hindu*.

Later, the authorities received a clearance certificate from the Pollution Control Board affirming that the operation was successfully carried out at the Cheemeni warehouse, Dr. Asheel, assistant nodal officer of the Endo-

sulfan Rehabilitation Cell, said. District Collector V.N. Jithendran congratulated the taskforce for successfully executing the delicate operation.

Reviews work

Mr. Jithendran, who visited the spot, reviewed the operations at the PCK warehouses at Periyar, Rajapuram, and Cheemeni. As many as 1,600 litres of the pesticide had been transferred to fresh barrels since the operation began on June 17. Interacting with the officials, Mr. Jithendran urged them to prepare a draft report for evolving an action plan to facilitate the final phase of the detoxification process, which is planned to be executed outside the district in three months.

C. Jayakumar, Stockholm Convention Observer and director of the Thiruvananthapuram-based environmental agency Thanai, Saini Philip from the Alappuzha Medical College, and the taskforce members were present at the meeting.

THE HINDU

25 June 2012

Endosulfan: hunger strike from today

Staff Reporter

KASABAGOD: The Endosulfan Satyagraha Samiti will organise a relay hunger strike from June 25 as part of intensifying its agitation against delay in providing relief to victims.

The recent decision of the State government to disburse relief in tune with the recommendations of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) lacked clarity, the samiti said in a statement issued here on Sunday.

"We have decided to intensify the two-month-old strike by resorting to a relay hunger strike in protest against the undue delay in implementing the comprehensive rehabilitation package," samiti convener Ambalathara Kunhi Krishnan said.

The decision to go by the NHRC recommendation lacked clarity as the government order does not mention anything about disbursing compensation or the mode of

free treatment for victims, he said. The agitation would continue till the government came forward to allay such concerns and other demands put forth by the families affected. It appeared that the disbursement of relief could drag on as the government decision had to be ratified by the NHRC, he said.

The samiti would meet the P. Prabhakaran Commission during its three-day visit, scheduled to begin on July 1.

The commission's mandate was to prepare draft district development proposals to be submitted to the government in six months.

The decision to intensify the agitation was taken after samiti's meeting with Chief Minister Oommen Chandy, Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee president Ramesh Chennithala, and legislators in Thiruvananthapuram on June 12 failed to find tenable solutions to the demands raised by the samiti, he said.

26 June 2012

Demands of endosulfan victims will be conceded, says Minister

Mothers of victims have decided to go ahead with a fast

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Agriculture Minister K.P. Mohanan told the Assembly on Monday that the government was willing to concede the demands of endosulfan victims.

The Minister was replying to the demands for grants for Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Stationary and Printing and other Administrative Services.

Mr. Mohanan said mothers of the victims had decided to go ahead with their indefinite hunger strike despite the government promising to concede all their demands. It had already doubled the monthly assistance to them and decided to pay the compensation recommended by the National Human Rights Commission.

Horticult board

The Minister announced that the government proposed to set up a horticult board for expanding vegetable cultivation to all available land in the State. Agrimalls

- Mohanan says monthly assistance doubled
- Compensation recommended by NHRC to be paid

would be set up at Anayara, Marad, Muvattupuzha, Kakkanad, and Vengeri for procurement and marketing of agriculture, dairy, and related products.

Preliminary steps had been taken for setting up the proposed rice bioparks in Kuttanad and Palakkad and coconut bioparks in Kozhikode, Thrissur, and Thiruvananthapuram.

He said that a floriculture park would be started at Munnar to promote cultivation of flowers. A scheme would be started to encourage individuals and organisations to invest in processing, grading, and marketing of bananas, pineapple, jackfruit, strawberry, and flowers.

Research

Kerala Agricultural University would undertake research in collaboration with

other organisations for development of secondary agriculture products including biodiesel and organic pesticides and fungicides. A one-year course in solid waste management would be started at the university. The university would undertake consultancy programmes to mop up its revenues besides supply of seeds and seedlings.

Mr. Mohanan reiterated that the government was committed to keep the State GM-free. Steps would be taken to promote organic farming and marketing of vegetables without pesticide residues under the label 'Safe to Eat Food.'

Acquisition of land was in progress for the bio-resource-cum-agro centre to be set up at Koothuparamba. The centre would have a farm machinery training centre, agroprocessing centre, hitech

diary farm, and high-tech veterinary hospital. Programmes such as Karshaka Raksha, Swantanam, and Niravu would be extended to all parts of State.

He said the breeding policy of the State would be revised. The government would continue to offer free insurance to cattle.

Minister for Home and Vigilance Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan said that it was not the policy of the government to order Vigilance inquiries for political reasons. A criminal case had arisen against member of the Assembly K. K. Jayachandran not because of any action taken by the government but because of some disclosures made by CPI (M) leader M.M. Mani.

Mr. Radhakrishnan said that all those wanted behind the murder of RMP leader T.P. Chandrasekharan to be brought to book. As per a Supreme Court judgment, the police had the right to look into matters connected to a case it was investigating.

The Indian EXPRESS

30 June 2012

Havoc Remains, Cause Disappears

In the villages of Kasargod that were sprayed with endosulfan, there remains a fear about that silent DNA strand that could turn cranky

by Reema Narendran

Endosulfan again. This time, it is a combined research work of the School of Industrial Technology, Universiti Sains Malaysia and the Institute of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Banaras Hindu University. They have found that even years after the endosulfan ban, possibility of children being born with deformities, continues to be real.

It would not have been an easy job for the researchers, Asha Embrandiri, Rajeev P Singh, Hakim M Ibrahim and Anisa B Khan, to collect information from a population who were fed up with a whole lot of different organisations. Understandable, for the outcome had been near-zero, irrespective of who conducted the study.

The whole array of health problems, from physical abnormalities to infertility and mental illness seen in Kasargod, could not be scientifically linked to endosulfan because by the time the State government woke up to the problem, the deadly pesticide had disappeared from the soil, water or air. The havoc it supposedly caused remained, while the causative agent left no clear-cut evidence.

On one side there were studies to prove that the abnormalities were caused by endosulfan, whereas on the other hand, there were attempts to prove that they were caused by genetic defects. Attempts because, a doctor from Manipal University who is believed to have made this attempt, like the pesticide, has left no trace.

This present work, unlike the many others done before, was aimed at finding out the current prevalent rates of common health problems associated to endosulfan exposure. It was published in the latest issue of 'Asian Journal of Epidemiology'.

The team conducted a survey from December



2008 to March 2009 in five panchayats surrounding the cashew farms of the Plantation Corporation of Kerala in Kasargod district. They included Enkamaje, Kumbadaje, Cheemem, Palluperrya and Mulliyar.

As many as a thousand respondents were chosen using a simple random survey. This included 104 boys and 166 girls in the 0-14 age group. Nearly half of the boys (46 per cent) were born with some form of handicap or birth defect. This was lesser among the girls (42.5 per cent).

A large chunk of people affected with problems of mental retardation and physical handicaps were found to be between the ages of 0-30 years, irrespective of the gender. "This may be because their parents might have been exposed to prolonged aerial spraying and thus had

children born with such problems," explain the researchers in the paper.

Skin problems continue to haunt people while women show several gynaecological problems such as disruption or stoppage of menstrual cycle and related disorders. Details on this and infertility among both genders is being held back from this column as it could lead to the natives having a tough time to marry off their children.

However, the good news is that the prevalence of both infertility and gynaecological problems has taken a nose-dive in the last few years. In fact, the prevalence rates of health problems in general had noticeably come down to as low as 0.38 for females in the 15-30 year age group in Cheemem.

Even while nature is trying to cleanse a land and its people of the poison that rained on them for decades without any check, there still remains a fear about the endosulfan molecules that may have accumulated in the human tissues and which could someday manifest as a DNA mutation. Let us pray that it would not.

(Keep track of the Sci-bug, every Saturday. And do not forget to give us a feedback on cityexpress-vm@newindianexpress.com)

THE HINDU

08 July 2012

12 July 2012

Crackdown on use of banned pesticides

A Correspondent

KATTAPPANA: District Collector T. Bhaskaran has ordered stringent action against use of endosulfan and other banned pesticides that reach the district from across the border.

At a meeting of the senior officials of various departments held at the collectorate in Painavu on Saturday, he said that there were reports of banned pesticides reaching the district in fake labels from Tamil Nadu. Jeeps carrying labourers daily from Tamil Nadu to the cardamom plantations are also carriers of the banned pesticides. Outdated pesticides were also being supplied to the farmers.

The Collector ordered that the departments of Road Transport, Agriculture, Excise and the police should strengthen the drive against banned pesticides. Border check posts should be effectively used for curbing the transportation of endosulfan, other banned and outdated pesticides.

He said that cardamom plantations should be routinely checked for banned pesticides and that the magistrate in the area should be informed immediately if they

are found in use. The banned substances should be shifted and kept in a safe area according to the direction of the magistrate.

Principal agriculture officer V.M. Sasikumar informed the Collector that endosulfan was reaching the district from various re-packaging centres in Tamil Nadu in different labels. There is an increased chance of banned pesticides being transported here during the cardamom harvesting season. It was also reported that the red-labelled pesticides are increasingly being used on vegetable crops in the district.

Mr. Sasikumar said that it had been found that the use of outdated pesticides and high dosages harmed the plants. Agents of the fake pesticide companies are supplying the banned pesticides in the plantation areas, the Collector was informed.

There are reports that farmers had used around 30,000 tonnes of banned pesticides last year.

The banned pesticides include Carbofuran, Forate, Mythyl Parathion, Monocrotophos, Methyl Demeton, Triazophos, Profenphos, Edifenphos, Anilofos, Taioben-carb and Atrazine.

Further relief for endosulfan victims likely

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Chief Minister Oommen Chandy is convening a meeting of MLAs from Kasaragod district on Thursday to decide on further relief measures for the victims of endosulfan poisoning.

Responding to a submission from Congress MLA T.N. Prathapan, he said 3,720 people affected by endosulfan toxicity had been given cards entitling them to free medical treatment at 11 empanelled hospitals in the State, besides one in Mangalore in Karnataka.

He described the various steps (including the provision of monthly pension and compensation) the government had already sanctioned for these people and said they were in need of further support. Representatives of organisations doing humanitarian work among the endosulfan victims too would be invited for the meeting.

The Indian EXPRESS

10 July 2012

Empanelment of Hospitals Worry Endosulfan Victims

by Nafeesa M P

Kasaragod: Seventeen-year-old Karthik, an endosulfan victim, is suffering from many disorders including stammering and mental illness that cannot be cured.

But his urological problems can be cured with a surgery. Unfortunately, hospitals empanelled by the government for the treatment of endosulfan victims, has become a hurdle in the process.

Karthik has already undergone three surgeries, one on neck and two on ureter.

The surgeries were performed at the KMC Hospital in Mangalore. But as per a government order that came eight months ago, the only hospital in Mangalore that can treat endosulfan victims is Yenepoya Hospital.

There are 12 hospitals empanelled for treatment of endosulfan victims.

Though medical science says any doctor can treat a patient after studying their case, experts are of the opinion that it is better if you consult the same doctor.

"Dr Laxman Prabhu at KMC Hospital was treating

him. If the surgery is done at KMC Hospital, we won't get financial aid from the government. And I can't afford the expenses," said Karthik's father Jagjeevandas Shetty, a resident of Bellur.

"I managed to meet the expense of the first surgery while for the other two surgeries, I got government aid," he added.

Earlier, the financial aid was provided to all hospitals in Mangalore.

"As of now, the patient's family has got only two options -- they can either try to get special permission from

the government or forward the bill for reimbursement, which we can approve if the surgery is not too costly," said Sudheer Babu, who is in charge of the endosulfan cell in the district.

Though Jagjeevandas has submitted an application to the Chief Minister through the Endosulfan Remediation Cell in the district, no action has been taken yet.

Patients who were relying on various hospitals are a worried lot after the empanelment of hospitals for treatment of endosulfan victims.

The Indian EXPRESS

22 July 2012

THE NEW SUNDAY EXPRESS
KOZHIKODE 22 JULY 2012

MAL

CONCORD Begins

Express News Service

Kasargod: The two-day national workshop CONCORD 2012 (Consultative Workshop on Rehabilitation of Endosulfan Victims and Rejuvenation of Ecosystem), organised by the district Panchayat and National Programme for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disability (NPRPD) was inaugurated by Chief Minister Oommen Chandy on Saturday.

In his inaugural address, the chief minister assured that the government would continue its efforts to rehabilitate the endosulfan victims of the district. "In spite of some financial short comings, the government would never step back from the commitment of fulfilling the needs of those who are affected by the killer pesticide," he said. The chief minister also assured to improve facilities at the Buds School.

In the keynote address, Sunitha Narain, the director of the Centre for Science and Environment, stressed the importance of securing bright future for the victims through health relief, palliative care, special education. She also asked the government to check the possibilities of providing employment for those who were affected by the use of the pesticide. She said that the focus should be on people living with disabilities than the deceased.

"The government has learned from the Bhopal Tragedy and the frame work for rehabilitation process in the district is on right track," she said.

"Decentralisation of health facilities by establishing local care centre at panchayat level is the need of the hour. The restoration of environment is as important as the relief services." She expressed her happiness over the district authorities efforts in making the district bio district.

"The district should be remembered as the one which turned around from a disaster-hit zone to a self sustained district. She congratulated the government for its



Sunita Narain, the director of the Centre for Science and Environment, delivering the Keynote address at the CONCORD 2012 in Kasargod on Saturday

Provide More Facilities to Endosulfan Victims: Sunita Narain

Kasargod: Sunita Narain, director of the Centre for Science and Environment, said here on Saturday that the endosulfan victims in the district should be provided with more facilities. She was in the district to attend the National workshop CONCORD 2012.

Though she applauded the state government for giving rightful recognition to the endosulfan issue in the district, Narain reminded the government that there were more to be done. "The facilities at the Buds school should be improved.

More teachers capable of providing students with special education and physiotherapists should be appointed in these schools," she said, adding that the health facilities for the victims should be decentralised by providing palliative care units with more facilities at all 11 panchayats affected by the pesticide.

Commenting on the genuineness of the list of victims, Narain opined that the government followed the best available method in identifying the victims. These people were declared

victims by an independent doctors' board after holding medical camps for the 7000 people identified after a house to house survey.

She strongly opposed the endosulfan manufacturers' stance on the issue and said that there was enough scientific evidence to prove that the disabilities were caused by the pesticide. She stressed that the victims in the district did not want anything but medical relief.

The rehabilitation work should instil hope among the victims, she said.

stance on the issue saying, "There was immense pressure to sabotage the Kozhikode Medical College's report on endosulfan tragedy, but Kerala government did not succumb to the pesticide manufacturer lobby."

Narain also reminded that it was the result of continued effort from people like Dr Mohan Kumar, Shree Padre, Leela Kumariamma and others

who struggled for the past one-and-half decades.

The programme souvenir was released by agricultural minister K P Mohanan at the inaugural event where in MP P Karunakaran presided over.

District collector V N Jeethendran presented the report and NHRM 2012 programme was launched by Sunitha Narain.

MLAs NA Nellikunnu, K Kunhiraman (Udumalpet), K Kuchiparambil (Kannur), E Chandrashekharam, PB Abdu Razak, Kasargod Municipal Chairman T E Abdulla, former ministers CT Ahamadali, Cherkalam Abdulla, District collector V N Jeethendran.

Representatives of various political parties were also present.

22 July 2012

Provide More Facilities to Endosulfan Victims: Sunita Narain

Express News Service

Kasaragod: Sunita Narain, the director of the Centre for Science and Environment, said here on Saturday that the endosulfan victims in the district should be provided with more facilities. She was in the district to attend the National workshop CONCORD 2012.

Though appreciated the state government for giving the rightful recognition to the endosulfan issue in the district, Narain reminded the government that there were more to be done.

"The facilities at the buds school should be improved. More teachers capable of providing students with special education and Physiotherapists should be appointed at these schools," she said, adding that the health facilities for the victims should be decentralised by providing palliative care units with more facilities at all 11 panchayats affected by the pesticide. On commenting on the genuineness of the list of victims, Narain opined that the government followed the best available method in identifying the victims. As these people

were declared victims by an independent doctors' board after holding medical camps for the 7000 people identified after a house to house survey.

She strongly opposed the endosulfan manufacturers' stance on the issue and said that there were enough scientific evidence to prove that the disabilities were caused by the pesticide.

She stressed that the victims in the district did not want anything but the medical relief. Narain said that the rehabilitation works should instil hope among the victims.

THE HINDU

22 July 2012

Give pesticide victims hope, says activist

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: Environmental activist Sunita Narain has said that the major task before the administration is to bring hope and cheer back to the life of the victims of endosulfan pesticide.

"Assuaging the hurt feelings of hundreds of victims of aerial spraying of the endosulfan in the State-owned cashew estates in the district is the most important task before the administration and the State government," she said. Dr. Narain was addressing a two-day workshop on endosulfan, 'CONCORD-12', that commenced here on Saturday. Chief Minister Oommen Chandy inaugurated the

workshop. Dr. Narain said that the administration must strive to implement the rehabilitation package for the victims by setting up not only medical colleges, but also ensuring medical facilities at the panchayat level in the affected localities.

She said the pesticide lobby was very influential, and complimented the Kerala government and Chief Minister Oommen Chandy, in particular, for not succumbing to the pressures exerted by the lobby.

Dr. Narain, who is the Director of the New Delhi-based Society for Environmental Communications, had visited a few affected families in the district,

The Indian EXPRESS

23 July 2012

Centre Should Provide More Aid for Rehab of Endosulfan Victims: Muneer

Express News Service

Kasargod: "It is our responsibility to identify the real endosulfan victims and include them in the list. The relief provided by the government should reach the original victims of the tragedy," said Minister for Social Welfare M K Muneer. He was speaking after inaugurating the

two-day national workshop CONCORD 2012 (Consultative Workshop on Rehabilitation of Endosulfan Victims and Rejuvenation of Ecosystem) held here on Sunday.

The workshop was organised by the district panchayat and National Programme for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disability (NPRPD) to draft a blueprint

of rehabilitation and restoration of ecology in the 11 Endosulfan-hit panchayats of the district.

The minister also said that the Central government should provide more aid for the Endosulfan victims.

"Being the government of a country that manufactures and exports the pesticide, the Centre has the responsibility to rehabilitate the vic-

tims," he said.

The minister in his inaugural speech assured that the facilities at the Buds schools would be improved soon and more teachers would be recruited.

Treatment for patients through Ayurveda and Panchakarma will be included in the medical facilities. He also promised that an artificial limb manufacturing

factory, with modern technology would be established in the district. He also said that of the 100 motor vehicles, 20 would be distributed for the disabled persons in the district. District panchayat president P P Shyamala Devi handed over the declaration to M K Muneer. The same declaration would be submitted to the Central government.

30 July 2012

Endosulfan: KSSP Flays Centre's Move

Thiruvananthapuram: The Kerala Sahitya Parishath (KSSP) has flayed the Central Government's request to the apex court to allow the sale and use of endosulfan in all states except Kerala and Karnataka.

The toxic effects of endosulfan that was sprayed on the cashew plantations of Kasargod and the physical, mental and genetic problems

faced by the people in the area had been widely discussed, even internationally.

The KSSP pointed out that there was not even a single study to prove that these health problems were not caused by endosulfan.

At the same time there were many studies which said that endosulfan could be the villain.

The demand for a complete ban on endosulfan, is now decades-old in these regions. Over 20 commissions were set up to study the issue. It was in this background that the Supreme Court decided to ban the production and sale of endosulfan in 2011.

As it is a pesticide which comes in the Persistent Organic Pollutant (POP) list, it

has been banned in most countries, including the US. The experience of Kerala with this pesticide also contributed to this ban.

However, the Central Government's present move could only be to help the pesticide lobby. The KSSP warned that a widespread agitation is the need of the hour to protest against such anti-people policies. ENS

 **The Indian EXPRESS**

25 July 2012

Endosulfan: DYFI to File Counter-Affidavit in SC

Express News Service

Tirupur: DYFI state secretary T V Rajesh has said that the DYFI will file a counter-affidavit in the Supreme Court against the Central Government's affidavit that endosulfan can be sold all over the country except in Kerala and Karnataka.

The Central Government's Agricultural Ministry director Vandana Siva, in a 100-page affidavit, had said that the government should allow endosulfan to be sold, as exporting the piled up endosul-

fan stock was not practical.

Rajesh said that the expert committee engaged by the Supreme Court had clearly found that endosulfan had toxic effects on human health and environment.

The Supreme Court had also made it clear that the report was authentic and that there was no need for any further studies.

"Labelling and limiting the endosulfan issue as a regional problem and the Central Government's decision to give a clean chit to endosulfan is a violation of people's

right to live," Rajesh said in a statement issued here on Tuesday.

He also pointed out the instance of Bollywood actor Aamir Khan publicly going against the use of endosulfan in Punjab, where the incidence of cancer is on the rise. Aamir had even requested the Prime Minister to urgently intervene in the matter. Rajesh said that until the government stops pushing people to death to appease the pesticide lobby, the DYFI would continue the legal battle.

26 July 2012

Endosulfan Manufacturers Heave a Sigh of Relief

Express News Service

Kasargod: With the Centre recommending lifting of the endosulfan ban in all states other than Kerala and Karnataka, Excel Cro Care Ltd, Coromandel Fertilisers and Hindusthan Insecticide Ltd, the three major companies which manufacture the pesticide, can soon sell their stocks worth crores of rupees in the market. The Centre's decision favouring the companies in the Supreme Court is a great relief for these endosulfan manufacturers as the ban had resulted in huge losses to them. Three of these companies, operating in India, make the country the largest manufacturer of endosulfan in the world.

According to the annual report, Excel Crop Care's profit dipped to the tune of

₹39.95 crore in 2011-12 after the Supreme Court banned the production and sale of endosulfan in May 2011. The report mentions that the ban has affected the profit.

The export revenue of the company increased to ₹255.8 crore from ₹232.24 crore following an SC order during September and December that allowed partial export of the stock. The closing stock details in March 2012 show around ₹16.30 crore inventories including raw and manufactured endosulfan.

The EID Parry which owns the Coromandel Fertilizers Ltd reported a dip of 10 per cent in its turnover after the ban. Sabero fertilizer manufacturing company under Coromandel, which produces endosulfan and other plant protection chemicals, incurred a loss of ₹61.224

crore. "Sabero's revenue from operations for the year ended on March 31 was ₹358.43 crore with a net loss of ₹61.24 crore. The production of Sabero during the year was impacted under judicial restraint. However, the company was able to get permission for utilisation of capacity up to 75 per cent starting December 2011," the annual report said.

Meanwhile, for HIL, which is a Central Government enterprise, 50 per cent of the company's sales profit was earned through the sales of endosulfan.

The ban will continue in the state but it doesn't mean the people here will not have exposure to the pesticide as most of the vegetables we need are imported from neighbouring states including Tamil Nadu.

THE HINDU

27 July 2012

27/7/12
**'Allow use of
 endosulfan
 except in
 Kerala
 and Karnataka'**

J. Venkatesan

NEW DELHI: The Centre has asked the Supreme Court to allow the use of pesticide endosulfan in all States except Kerala and Karnataka, as these States are ready to use it for agricultural pest control.

The Supreme Court in May last year banned the production and sale of endosulfan in the country. In April this year, it asked the Centre to ascertain the quantity of raw material lying with three companies (producers of the banned pesticide endosulfan) and the manner in which the raw material could be disposed of.

The Centre responded in an affidavit that "the cost of disposal of live stock of endosulfan by incineration shall be more than Rs.210.82 crore, whereas phasing out would not only result in saving this huge amount on disposal but would also save the product worth Rs.31.36 lakh, which would contribute to increased crop production/productivity."

It said that "24 countries are still using endosulfan. The international conventions and global practices also suggest phasing out. The FAO also recommends disposal of live stock of pesticides through phasing out by its judicious use as per good agricultural practices for crop protection purposes."

The Centre said that "in India too use of several pesticides was banned in the past and the live stocks thereof were allowed to be disposed of by phasing out. Of the 19 States which participated in the meeting convened by the expert committee, except Kerala and Karnataka, other States were in favour of [the] continued use of endosulfan for the reasons being broad spectrum, cheaper, most popular among farmers, safe to pollinators, no reports of resistance/resurgence or ill effects on human beings, animals and environment. Thus, States other than Kerala and Karnataka are ready to use endosulfan for agricultural pest control."

The Centre referred to the Stockholm Convention held last year which had advised the phasing out of the pesticide over a five-year period. Thus, the use of endosulfan, which has not expired, may be allowed in India so as to exhaust the existing stock of raw materials and finished products. As per international practice, products are phased out by making an advance announcement of the cut off dates for import or manufacture."

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

THE HINDU • FRIDAY, JULY 27, 2012

Greens cry foul at endosulfan stand

Centre's affidavit before Supreme Court

Giji K. Raman

KATTAPPANA: Environmentalists in Idukki district see a grand design in the Central government's affidavit before the Supreme Court that seeks to allow the sale of endosulfan in the country except in Kerala and Karnataka.

The ban in Kerala, they aver, will not be effective if the pesticide is freely available in neighbouring Tamil Nadu. They point out that in the border district of Idukki, where cardamom is grown in large scales, highly toxic (red-labelled) pesticides are widely used even after their ban.

Environmentalist and social activist K.N. Sulaiman alleges that the government's stance is surely to help the endosulfan company and definitely not the people. This calls for a parallel movement for a total ban on the highly toxic pesticide.

John Peruvanthanam, environmentalist, says that in the district's cardamom sector, it has reached a point where even the highly toxic endosulfan has turned ineffective. The only remedy he sees is a strict ban on all highly toxic pesticides including endosulfan. After its ban (introduced in Kerala sometime

- Centre for ban only in Kerala, Karnataka

- Greens say porous borders will foil the ban

back), it has been noticed that endosulfan continues to reach the cardamom sector of Idukki with workers from the Cumbom and Theni areas being used as carriers. Though checking has been intensified in the Kumily and Cumbommettu border checkpoints, the pesticide still makes its way to the district through the porous borders of the district. According to Mr. Peruvanthanam, hybrid varieties of cardamom are being cultivated in the district and these are highly sensitive to pest attacks. A high level of pesticide application, besides use of chemical fertilizers, is needed for their care.

Studies, he points out, have revealed that 76 species of snakes have disappeared from the area. The figures for other living beings such as butterflies and frogs are yet to be assessed. Water sources in the cardamom areas and streams and rivers in the district are found highly toxic.

This has a wider ramification as the rivers from the high ranges are the main source of drinking water for the neighbouring Ernakulam.

Mr. Sulaiman says that the cardamom farmers could not be blamed for the use of highly toxic pesticides as the government policy itself is for promoting their wide use. It is only through government intervention that the ban will become effective. The vegetable farming community in the Vattavada and Kanthallur areas are also using highly toxic pesticides, he says pointing out the findings of recent studies.

Social activist Raju Xavier says it is now clear that the government stands for multinational companies and seems to be not keen on its social commitment. The endosulfan issue should be seen as one that affects the coming generations. A commission should be appointed by the government to find for itself how the highly toxic pesticides have affected the people in the cardamom plantation areas, especially at Vandamadu, Mali, and Chakkupallom.

See also Page 13

THE HINDU

22 August 2012

Endosulfan: mothers take up the baton now

Roy Mathew

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: When the mothers of endosulfan victims in Kasargod district began an indefinite agitation in April, it marked a turning point in the agitation seeking compensation and government action for relief and remediation of the victims.

For, it were the mothers who took the brunt of their children being born with a multiplicity of disabilities, including mental retardation, neuro-behavioural and cognitive disorders, cortical blindness, hydrocephalus, seizure disorders, congenital malformations, damaged immune and endocrine systems, skin diseases and many other problems.

Take the instance of Syamada, mother of Udayan at Vani Nagar. Udayan was born with mental retardation and physical disabilities. Like many other mothers in the locality, she discovered that her child could not walk or speak properly. Her husband died early in life possibly on account of diseases caused by drunkenness. She had to take care of her child single-handedly.

Constant struggle

As the child needs constant attention, she cannot go out to work. So, she has to confine herself to the house with the meagre earnings she can get from rolling beads at home. Her son has to be taken to five medical camps and a dozen doctors before physiotherapy arranged by the youth organisation 'Solidarity' helped him walk with assistance.

Not far from her house, Pancha of Beejithakatte may be considered luckier. She has her husband, Kaswan, as breadwinner. But she has to take care of two visually challenged sons, Devikiran and Jeevanraj, and their studies.

They have to be sent every day to a school for the visually challenged in faraway Kasargod town, which is not connected to their home even by a bus service.

Sajith of Villathatta colony suffers from a disease that makes his bones brittle. He has been lying on the floor ever since he was born without the possibility of any movement.

His mother is the only person who can handle him without his bones being broken.



LUGUBRIOUS TALES: Udayan, an endosulfan victim, with his mother at Vani Nagar in Kasargod.

This meant that she has to be at his side whenever he is to be moved.

Women in the locality also

suffer many other problems silently. Many in the endosulfan-affected areas have menstrual problems. Initially,

they tried to keep it a secret. But it has come to be known wide, starting to affect marriage prospects of young

women. Abortions are frequent among married women in the region.

The villagers often took this as fate. Some believed that an evil spirit had its grip on their village.

They were too weak and too poor to protest or raise their voices. This meant that the State-owned Plantation Corporation of Kerala was able to carry on with aerial spraying of endosulfan against the rules for more than two decades.

And even a decade after it stopped doing so, help has not reached the victims in full scale and none in the Corporation has been held accountable.

Local protests over endosulfan were spearheaded by people who were marginally affected or living on the periphery of the village or Kasargod town. So, they were often intermittent and without the direct participation of the victims.

It is this situation that is changing with the entry of mothers who have been suffering for long.

They may win most of their demands as their counterparts have been able to do at Plachimada.

Fast on Thiruvonam

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: A group of women representing the mothers of endosulfan victims in Kasargod district will observe 'Thiruvonam' as a day of fasting in front of the official residence of Chief Minister Oommen Chandy here.

At a press conference here on Tuesday, the members of Endosulfan Preetha Janakeya Munnani, a movement of the people affected by endosulfan poisoning in Kasargod district, said the fast was in protest against the government sabotaging all programmes for giving financial assistance, ensuring proper medical attention and rehabilitating those who had developed serious maladies on account of the aerial spraying of the pesticide in the cashew plantations in the area.

Agitation

Convener of the movement Ambalathara Koshikrishnan said the people of the area had been on an agitation for the last 123 days in front of the Kasargod District Collectorate. The government, which had issued an order stating that it would implement all the proposals of the National Human Rights Commission for assisting the endosulfan victims, was, in reality, trying to sabotage the proposals.

The commission had estimated the number of people directly affected by the pesticide poisoning as 6,000. However, the government's latest decision was to give the Rs. 5-lakh compensation, recommended by the commission to the seriously affected, only to 180 victims. He said exclusion from the list of victims eligible for the assistance had driven a 60-year-old man named Jans Naik to suicide on Monday.

He said the government was considering for assistance only the affected people from 11 panchayats where the cashew plantations of Plantation Corporation of Kerala were located. The National Human Rights Commission had asked the government to conduct a survey by bearing panchayat find out the affected pe-

Relief package diluted, says front

Staff Reporter

KASARGOD: Alleging that the State government is "diluting the spirit" of the relief and rehabilitation packages suggested by the National Human Rights Commission for endosulfan victims, the Endosulfan Janakeya Preetha Munnani, an organisation of the affected population, has urged the commission to ask the administration to execute its recommendations properly.

In a letter dated August 20 to the Chairman of the commission, Ambalathara Koshikrishnan, convener of the front, which had been spearheading an indefinite relay hunger strike by mothers of the victims since April 20, said, "It appears that there has been glaring discrepancies in the steps taken as per the Commission's recommendation dated December 31, 2010 and the

- Complaints to NHRC about government move
- Says aid limited to a few people

subsequent Government Order of May 5, 2012 stating that the State government had opted to implement relief and rehabilitation packages as per the NHRC recommendation."

Mr. Koshikrishnan said bed-ridden victims and those mentally challenged had been excluded from the category for financial assistance of Rs. 5 lakh suggested by the commission.

Narrow interpretation

The clause that "a panel of doctors may assess the extent of physical disability to classify the categories of victims" was interpreted narrowly so as to exclude patients with cancer and other serious disabilities attributed to prolonged

exposure. People who had been included on the official list of victims through medical camps held in August and December 2010 were not listed as eligible for assistance.

The commission had estimated that there were 6,000 victims. The government, however, limited the Rs. 5 lakh assistance to just 180 people and Rs. 3 lakh to just 1,200 people.

"This is quite contrary to the letter and spirit of the NHRC recommendations and in effect a denial of natural justice to many deserving victims," he said. It further said the recommendation to survey other affected panchayats was neglected as family people of 11 panchayats had

been taken into consideration for financial assistance. This was in contrast to the government's assertion earlier that the victims were spread in over 27 panchayat limits.

Parameters

The commission urged to initiate steps to determine the affected areas by scientifically assessing parameters such as topography, meteorology, land use, water flow and seepage and wind direction and to include neighbouring localities affected by the overuse of the pesticide in the district.

The front, joining hands with the Anti-Endosulfan Campaign Committee, on Tuesday took out a march to the Collectorate as 60-year-old Jans Naik committed suicide after his name was not found on the official list of victims, though he had cancer.

The Indian EXPRESS

22 August 2012

Govt Apathy Blamed for Endosulfan Victim's Suicide

Express News Service

Kasargod: The suicide of Janu Naik of Bellur Panchayat proved the government's apathy towards rehabilitating the endosulfan victims, said P Karunakaran MP in Kasargod on Tuesday.

The MP visited the Kasargod General Hospital when the body of Janu Naik, who was found dead after consuming poison at his residence in Bellur, was brought to the hospital.

The MP also alleged that the new list published by the authorities was unacceptable and it mocks the recommendations of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). The list prepared by the NHRC was based on the findings of the team led by Justice Balakrishnan, who personally

visited the affected areas in the district, the MP added.

He also said that the state government had failed to provide any aid to the victims, from the ₹475 crore allocated by the central government for the victims.

The MP also alleged that the list was handed over to these panchayats without even informing the endosulfan cell which was chaired by district panchayat president. He assured that a memorandum would be submitted to the government to include deserving victims in the list after the next meeting of the Endosulfan Cell.

N A Nellikunnu MLA, District panchayat president P P Shyamala Devi, former minister Cherukalam Abdulla, DYFI district secretary Siji Mathew and

president Madhu Muthiyakal also visited the hospital.

Meanwhile, the Endosulfan Preetha Munnani and Endosulfan Virudha Samithi jointly organised protest march to the collectorate on Tuesday. The protesters alleged that government's brutal policies led to Janu Naik's death.

The protesters demanded rightful compensation for the victims in the district.

The protesters also submitted a memorandum demanding review of the list published by the government.

Social activist Narayanan Periya inaugurated the protest meet. K B Muhammed Kushi presided over. P V Sathya Kumar, advocate Radhakrishnan Perumbala, K P Jacob and Madhu S Nair also participated.



23 August 2012

23/8/12
nile

New Endosulfan Victims' List Dashes Hopes of Patients

by Nafeesa M P

Kasargod: The re-categorised list of endosulfan victims in 11 panchayats of the district has shattered the hopes of many patients, who were under the impression that the government's decision to pay the compensation recommended by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) would end their woes to some extent. The rehabilitation package, though not a rightful compensation for many who cannot even get out of their beds, could have been a relief.

Janu Naik, 64, who committed suicide by consuming poison at his residence in Bellur on Monday, was one among them.

According to health officials who knew Janu Naik, he was very disappointed to know that his name was not included in the fresh list.

A throat cancer patient, Naik was a first category victim in the previous list that is available at the Endosulfan Cell here. "In the new list, as many as 103 patients are included in the 'totally bedridden' category. The government plans to pay the compensation by Onam," Deputy Collector P K Sudheer Babu said. As per the previous list, there were a total of 4,880 endosulfan victims in the district of whom 567 were bedridden.

The number of bedridden patients has declined to a mere 103 in the fresh list as against the earlier 567, a huge difference of 464 ben-

eficiaries. As many as 734 people in the list are dead.

Currently, there are only 103 persons in the bedridden category, which means that the compensation to be given to them has been reduced to ₹5.15 crore from ₹28.35 crore. If at all the 464 patients get included in the fourth category, that is 'persons with disability', only Rs 13.92 crore will be needed as compensation.

The district administration has received only the first category list so far.

The government had agreed to pay Rs 5 lakh to the bedridden victims, of which Rs 3 lakh will be given in the first phase.

This amount will be distributed in two instalments of Rs 1.5 lakh. The remaining Rs 2 lakh will be kept as a deposit and the beneficiaries will be given a monthly assistance of Rs 2,000 for a period of five years, that is equal to the return for long-term deposit.

According to District Collector V N Jithendran, the list is tentative and was published after a thorough study of patients' case history by experts. "The re-categorisation was done solely for matching the government's list with the commission's list. We have also invited objections if there are any," he added.

The NHRC has categorised the endosulfan victims into four sections — bedridden, deceased persons, mentally-challenged patients and persons with disability. "But

Govt Sabotaging Rehabilitation Projects for Endosulfan Victims: VS

T'Puram: Opposition leader V S Achuthanandan has said in a statement that the State Government was sabotaging the projects aimed at rehabilitating endosulfan victims. He also alleged that the government was also twisting the Human Rights Commission's recommendations according to its convenience.

While the UDF Government openly agreed to pay Rs 5 lakh to the families of those victims who died or were affected with cancer, as per the recommendations of the Human Rights Commission, the promise has not been kept.

The UDF Government has given up the initiative taken by the previous government to waive off the

debts of endosulfan victims.

The previous LDF Government had implemented a moratorium on the debts, the term of which ended on March 31. Instead of beginning the procedures for writing off the debts, the government has begun revenue recovery procedures, the statement said. Achuthanandan demanded that the government should take immediate steps to write off the debts.

Achuthanandan also alleged that the present government had initiated moves to scuttle the pension given to victims in the order of Rs 2,000 and Rs 1,000. There is also anxiety among the victims that of the 4,880 patients in the list only 180 would be given

any real financial aid, he said. The names of victims affected with cancer are also being struck off the list, the Opposition Leader said. "This even led to an endosulfan victim's suicide," he pointed out.

Achuthanandan demanded that the government decision to elevate the 11 Primary Health Centres to Community Health Centres should be implemented and enough doctors in these centres.

He also called for the revival of the previous government's decision to allot one vehicle to a panchayat. He also demanded that the State Government should take urgent steps to implement the endosulfan rehabilitation package in its entirety. **ENS**

the district administration did not have a separate list of mentally challenged patients," said Sudheer Babu, adding that they were expecting the second category list in a couple of days.

"We have received a number of objections from various panchayats which were handed over to the DMO," he added.

The decision for re-categorising the victims' list was taken at a meeting held in

the presence of the chief secretary, finance secretary and health secretary in Thiruvananthapuram on July 24. District Collector V N Jithendran, Deputy Collector Sudheer Babu and NRHM coordinator Dr Asheel had attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, social activists here believe that the re-categorisation was the result of a conspiracy by the government to drop beneficiaries from the list and reduce the

compensation amount. According to activist Narayan Periya, the re-categorisation was done just to reduce the number of beneficiaries. "How can doctors know the plight of patients just by studying their case history? We can accept the list only if it is prepared after a comprehensive medical camp. How can they rely on medical reports to categorise victims? It should not be a drag and drop exercise," he said.

The Indian EXPRESS

24 August 2012

'Govt Will not Allow GM Seeds, Endosulfan Use'

Express News Service

T'Puram: The State Government will never allow GM seeds or the use of endosulfan in the state, said Agriculture Minister K P Mohanan.

He was presiding over the inaugural session of the two-day national seminar on organic farming intended to make Kasargod an organic village.

"Health security is what the government is aiming, through food security," said K P Mohanan. He said that both Chief Minister Oommen Chandy and Finance Minister K M Mani would be the pillars of strength for the agricultural sector in the state.

Chief Minister Oommen Chandy said that his govern-



ment had realised that the economic growth of Kerala was possible only through the development of the agricultural sector and the government was functioning on the basis of this truth.

"Along with attracting the younger generation to agriculture and encouraging organic farming, the marketing also needs to be strength-

ened," said Chandy.

Oommen Chandy said that the efforts made by the Sikkim Government to make Sikkim a organic farming state should be lesson for Kerala too.

Sikkim Agriculture Director Khorlo Bhutia handed over the copies of the book 'Sikkim Towards Fully Organic' to Chief Minister Oommen Chandy and Agriculture Minister K P Mohanan. In the inaugural session of the seminar, Agriculture secretary K R Jyothilal IAS, Agriculture Director R Ajithkumar, Planning Board Chief of agriculture Dr P Rajasekharan, agricultural scientists, Agriculture Department officials, model organic farmers and service providers of organic certification also spoke.

25 August 2012

Endosulfan Janakeeya Munnani to Stage Fast

T'Puram: The members of the Endosulfan Peeditha Janakeeya Munnani will stage a fast in front of the Chief Minister's residence on the Thiruvonam day in protest against the lackadaisical attitude of the government towards the rehabilitation of endosulfan victims in Kasargod. Office-bearers of the Munnani and Samara Samithi told reporters here on Friday that Chief Minister Oommen Chandy humiliated them at a meeting convened at his chamber to discuss the victims' rehabilitation on Friday. The mothers of the

victims arrived here after they were invited by the Chief Minister for the meeting at 8 p.m. on Thursday. However, they said that the Chief Minister ridiculed them by poking on their demands which led them to stage a sit-in in his chamber. "We complained that he didn't visit us when he was in Kasargod. But his reply was that he avoided visiting the protest venue in front of the Collectorate as we were staging the protest with mouths gagged," said a victim's mother.

The Samara Samithi of-

fice-bearers said that the Chief Minister said that debt relief measures cannot be offered as the same was not suggested by the National Human Rights Commission. They also alleged that the Chief Minister said that he was helpless to address their medical needs.

"The CM said that the doctors in government service were not willing to work in Kasargod even when they were offered Rs 20,000 additional remuneration. This shows either his inefficiency or lack of interest in the issue," they said. ENS

THE HINDU

25 August 2012

Endosulfan council flays Chandy's stand

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Endosulfan Peeditha Janakeeya Munnani, an action council of endosulfan victims in Kasaragod, has accused Chief Minister Oommen Chandy of making a mockery of the talks he had with them at his chamber on Thursday.

Munnani president T. Shobana told reporters here on Friday that the meeting with Mr. Chandy was arranged

through N.A. Nellikunnu, MLA, and when 10 mothers of the victims from panchayats met the Chief Minister he "ridiculed" them by saying that he could not hold talks with them on reaching Kasaragod on July 21 as they had gagged their mouth at the agitation venue.

Subsequently, the mothers demanded the Chief Minister to accept the National Human Rights Commission recommendations and

distribute Rs.5 lakh each to the 2,453 bed-ridden victims and Rs.3 lakh each to 1,729 other victims.

On informing that the assistance has been announced only for 103 persons, Mr. Chandy questioned the veracity of the information and said that assistance would be given to all deserving cases. He refused to heed to the request to issue an order extending the assistance to the mentally-retarded, cancer,

TB patients, and others. Now the victims in 11 panchayats alone have been identified. The request for identifying the victims in other panchayats was also not taken seriously. He turned down the plea to waive the bank loans and did not entertain even the appeal for ordering a moratorium.

He expressed his inability in deploying doctors in the affected areas saying doctors were unwilling to work there.

26 August 2012

Chief Minister denies charges

'Government did not humiliate mothers of endosulfan victims'

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Chief Minister Oommen Chandy has denied the allegation that the government had humiliated the mothers of endosulfan victims after inviting them for talks here on Thursday.

In a statement here on Saturday, Mr. Chandy said the government's attempt was to resolve the problems faced by the victims and their families through consultations with all concerned.

The meeting with the mothers of endosulfan victims was convened on Kasaragod MLA N.A. Nellikunnu's initiative. It was scheduled for 8 p.m. and it took place as scheduled immediately after the Cabinet

meeting.

Only a few women connected with the endosulfan stir had come for the meeting. Since it was felt that it would be better to take decisions on their demands at a meeting attended by the MP and MLAs from Kasaragod; representatives of the endosulfan victims; and the district panchayat president; it was proposed that a bigger meeting could be held at the earliest in Kasaragod.

It was resolved that decisions would be taken on all the related issues at a meeting to be convened under the leadership of Agriculture Minister K.P. Mohanan, the Minister in charge of Kasaragod, and Minister for Panchayats M.K. Muneer.

On behalf of the govern-

ment, he had assured the meeting that the government was committed to implementing the recommendations of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and that the anomalies in the list of victims would be rectified at the earliest. At this point, the victims' mothers came up with the demand that a decision on waiving the loans of the victims' families should be taken then and there. They were assured that since the information available on the issue was fragmentary, the matter would be taken up at the Kasaragod meeting. After he had left the meeting for briefing the media on Cabinet decisions, the women began shouting slogans and staged a sit-in, Mr. Chandy said.

The UDF government, the Chief Minister said, had done the most for the endosulfan victims. The government had issued orders for implementation of all the recommendations of the NHRC and declared 11 panchayats in the district as endosulfan-affected. The government was paying between Rs.1,000 to Rs.2,000 as pension to 4,182 victims.

It had also issued orders for payment of Rs.5 lakh to the kin of victims who had died and those who were bed-ridden and Rs.3 lakh to those who were physically challenged. As many as 734 people had also been given assistance at the rate of Rs.1 lakh from the Chief Minister's District Relief Fund, Mr. Chandy said.

26 August 2012

Endosulfan Virudha Samithi Members Disrespected CM: MLAs

Express News Service

Kasaragod: MLAs N A Nellikunnu and P B Abdurazak, at a press conference here on Saturday, alleged that the representatives of the Endosulfan Virudha Samithi disrespected Chief Minister during the talks between him and mothers of the victims in Thiruvananthapuram the other day.

The allegations by the Samithi that CM disgraced the women who partici-

pated in the meeting are baseless, the MLAs said. They also claimed that the Samithi leaders including many prominent activists had some hidden agenda and they were utilising the victims for it. They also said that many of the demands raised during the meeting were already agreed upon by the government.

The only difference that existed between the two parties was on the demand to write off the loans of the vic-

tims. They also informed that the chief minister was ready for talks in the presence of minister K P Mohanan having charge of the district.

Meanwhile, the Satyagraha held by the endosulfan victims completed 128th day in the district. Amidst the blame game continues, district authorities on Saturday started to distribute the first instalment of ₹ 1.5 lakh to the 103 victims included in the published list.

THE HINDU

27 August 2012

Endosulfan victims seek better deal

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Endosulfan Peeditha Janakeeya Munnani has accused the State government of trying to subvert the endosulfan victims' rehabilitation package proposed by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

In a statement here on Sunday, the organisation alleged that the government was distorting NHRC's recommendations thereby denying assistance to most of the victims and their families. The government was not making any attempt to map all the victims in all the affected panchayats and its decision to deposit a portion of the assistance being paid to the victims in banks so as to pay them pension could be seen only as a ploy to limit the entire assistance scheme to just five years.

The Munnani alleged that there was no complete list of those eligible for assistance under the rehabilitation

scheme. Not even the list of those who had participated in medical camps held in August and December 2010 had been published so far. Considering the possibility of the effects of endosulfan persisting for several generations, there should be a mechanism for periodic revision of the list. There were several families that had got pauperised spending huge sums for treatment of the victims. The LDF government had declared a moratorium on loans taken by such families. However, banks had begun issuing revenue recovery notices on such families. The government should take urgent steps to waive such loans. Although the NHRC had recommended upgrading of the 11 primary health centres in Kasaragod districts as community health centres to provide better healthcare to the victims, the government had not followed upon on this.

The government should take steps to ensure payment of compensation on 'polluter pays' principle.

THE HINDU

28 August 2012

Endosulfan victims' mothers call off stir

130-day-old relay hunger strike suspended following Chandy's promise

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: Finding the talks with Chief Minister Oommen Chandy "fruitful," the Endosulfan Peeditha Janakeeya Munnani, a people's front in support of the victims, has decided to suspend the 130-day indefinite relay hunger strike by the mothers of the victims.

Mr. Chandy, during the discussions with a delegation, led by P. Karunakaran, MP, and district panchayat president P.P. Shyamala Devi, in Thiruvananthapuram on Sunday, promised steps to meet the demands raised by the mothers for the rehabili-

itation of the victims and their families as suggested by the National Human Rights Commission. Ambikasudan Mangad, leader of the front, said at a press conference here on Monday.

"We have decided to suspend the indefinite relay hunger strike for at least two months in the light of Mr. Chandy's categorical assurance to address most of the demands raised by the agitators," Ambalathara Kunhikrishnan, convener of the front, said.

A day-long fast planned in front of the Chief Minister's official residence on Thiruv-

• Chief Minister promises to pay compensation

• Panel to be set up to study loan waiver

nam day has been called off.

Mr. Chandy promised to pay the compensation recommended by the commission — Rs. 5 lakh for the bedridden and the families of the dead and Rs. 3 lakh for the seriously ill.

He allayed apprehensions over the revised list of victims eligible for the assistance,

maintaining that what was published was a preliminary list.

He said a ministerial delegation, comprising Health Minister V.S. Sivakumar, Agriculture Minister K.P. Mohanan and Social Welfare Minister M.K. Muneer, would visit Kasaragod on September 3 in an attempt to compile the final report after talks with the MP and the local administration.

"We are eagerly awaiting the government's initiatives to meet the genuine demands raised by the victims' mothers, who silently bear the brunt of the man-made

health hazards caused by the overuse of endosulfan on the State-owned cashew estates in the district. We will explore options to intensify the agitation if the government fails to keep its assurances," Sulphath, an activist of the front, said.

One of the major demands raised by the agitating mothers was complete waiver of loans taken by the victims' families to meet medical expenses.

Mr. Chandy promised to consider the demand by setting up a committee to study its genuineness.

The Indian EXPRESS

28 August 2012

Mothers of Endosulfan Victims Call Off Satyagraha

Express News Service

Kasargod: Endosulfan Peeditha Janakeeya Munnani called off its 130-day-old Satyagraha on the Collectorate premises on Monday.

The representatives of the Munnani, at a press conference here, informed that the satyagraha by the mothers of endosulfan victims was called off temporarily following talks with Chief Minister Oommen Chandy and P. Karunakaran MP, district panchayat president P. P. Shyamala Devi, Karadukka block panchayat president B. M. Pradeep and Muliya gram panchayat president V. Bhavani.

The representatives led by the MP has urged the government to assure compensation to all the deserving victims and implementation of the recommendations of the NHRC.

Additionally, they have

also asked the government to write off the loans of the victims' families.

The Munnani representatives said that the CM had assured that the decisions on the demands would be taken by a team of ministers including Social Welfare Minister M. K. Muneer, Agriculture Minister K. P. Mohanan and Health Minister V. S. Shivakumar after talks with district authorities and people's representatives.

The Endosulfan Janakeeya Peeditha Munnani representatives said that the Satyagraha would be relaunched if the government fails to fulfill the promises.

Samithi members including Ambikasudan Mangad, Ambalathara Kunhikrishnan, T. C. Madhava Panicker, P. V. Sudheeran, A. Mohan Kumar, T. Shobhana, Zulphath and Misriya were present at the press conference.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

28 August 2012

State awaits Centre's aid for endosulfan victims

No Discrimination In Disbursing Aid, Assures Chandy

Viju B | TNN

Thiruvananthapuram: For the 5,000 odd endosulfan victims in Kasaragod district, it has been a long wait for a much-needed aid and rehabilitation of their shattered livelihood.

The victims include 995 people who became physically handicapped, 1,184 infants with congenital mental disorders and 225 cancer-afflicted people.

Responding to complaints from victims on selective disbursal of funds, chief minister Oommen Chandy on Monday said that there would be no discrimination while disbursing financial assistance.

But this is easier said than done, admit state officials. They point out that the



Endosulfan victims and relatives staged a sit-in at the CM's office on Thursday night after talks with him failed

cept in Kerala and Karnataka is yet another example of their pro-endosulfan stand," an official said.

The state government is

get Rs 5 lakh. Others who are suffering from various chronic ailments will get Rs 3 lakh each," a state official said

aid package would come to around Rs 130 crore and the state alone will not be able to bear this burden.

"The state has realized its mistake and now openly acknowledges that it was a huge mistake to aerial-spray the deadly pesticide over cashew plantations in Kasaragod that created this health catastrophe," C Jayakumar, trustee of Thanal, an environmental NGO, said.

He said the government should not allow the production of endosulfan when the Stockholm convention, a global treaty to protect health and environment had declared endosulfan as a persistent pollutant. Last year, India joined the list of 83 countries that have banned the use of this pesticide.

01 September 2012

Greens hail Supreme Court decision on endosulfan

Apex Court Orders Shifting Of Case To A Green Bench

Viju B | TNN

Thiruvananthapuram: Environmentalists have welcomed the Supreme Court order on Friday to shift the endosulfan case to a green bench. The move will benefit the case, especially since it has reached a critical juncture wherein the agriculture ministry wants the ban on the pesticide to be lifted in all states, except Kerala and Karnataka.

"The petition filed in the Supreme Court is against gross violation of environmental laws, as endosulfan was sprayed indiscriminately over cashew plantations in Kasaragod. Strangely



The 5,000-odd endosulfan victims in Kasaragod have been awaiting financial aid for the past two decades

enough, after the case came up in the court, it was the agriculture department which filed affidavits. Therefore, a proper environmental impact study on the side-effects

of the pesticide is yet to be done by the government," said C Jayakumar, trustee of Thanal, an environmental organization which has been probing endosulfan-related health issues in Kasaragod.

The court on Friday also pointed out that the report filed by the government was not clear on whether there had been an adverse impact by banning the pesticide. It asked the government to file another report to get a correct view on the issue.

Last year, the Supreme Court, acting on a writ petition filed by the Democratic Youth Federation of India, had banned the production and sale of endosulfan in the

country. The court had directed the state and Centre to freeze the production licences granted to manufacturers. "The government should not allow the production of endosulfan when the Stockholm convention, a global treaty to protect health and environment, has declared it as a persistent pollutant," Jayakumar said. Last year, India joined 83 countries that have banned its use.

The 5,000-odd endosulfan victims in Kasaragod have been awaiting financial aid and rehabilitation for the past two decades. However, the state is still preparing the final list of victims.



19 September 2012



10 October 2012

Endosulfan Package: Ministerial Team to Meet CM Today

Express News Service

Kasargod: Bringing relief to hundreds of endosulfan victims, the ministerial committee which visited the district on Tuesday announced that they would meet Chief Minister Oommen Chandy on Wednesday to give final shape to the relief package. The team comprising Agriculture Minister K P Mohanan, Health Minister V S Sivakumar and Social Welfare Minister M K Muneer visited Kasargod ahead of the distribution of the compensation recommended by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) for the victims.

"We are meeting the chief minister at his residence in Thiruvananthapuram on

Wednesday morning to present various grievances and complaints of the victims regarding the relief package," said K P Mohanan, who headed the team, after meeting representatives of various organisations working for the cause of endosulfan victims at the collectorate here.

"The relief and rehabilitation package will be finalised after discussing the matter at the next Cabinet meeting," Mohanan added.

The demands raised at the meeting were waiver of all loans availed by the affected families and setting up of a tribunal to determine the compensation amount.

The services of two well-equipped ambulances would be made available for the 11

THE RELIEF AND REHABILITATION PACKAGE WILL BE FINALISED AFTER DISCUSSING THE MATTER AT THE NEXT CABINET MEETING

panchayats where there is a high concentration of endosulfan victims, from Wednesday itself, said the minister. "The government is exploring the options to provide pension and other financial assistance for the victims through money orders in case one finds it difficult to use ATMs," M K Muneer said.

The team promised to take

a favourable stand on the demand to extend the package to those afflicted with strange diseases who are residing outside the notified panchayats. There are people with mental and physical disabilities in places like Mogral Puthur.

The ministers also announced that Kasturba Medical College, Mangalore, and an eye hospital in Angamaly will be included in the list of hospitals where treatment is provided to the endosulfan victims free of cost.

The list comprises Paryaram Medical College, Kozhikode Medical College, Yenepoya Medical College, Sri Chitra Medical and Regional Cancer Centre and Malabar Cancer Centre in Thalassery.

Panel to go into all aspects of endosulfan

Court asks Centre to spell out its stand

J. Venkatesan

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court has appointed an expert committee to go into all aspects of the ban on endosulfan and the disposal of the existing quantity of the pesticide.

The court has asked the Centre to spell out its stand on the manufacture and use of endosulfan in the country.

A Bench comprising Justice Swatanter Kumar and Justice Madan B. Lokur, hearing a writ petition filed by the Democratic Youth Federation of India on Tuesday, said the committee to be headed by the Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) would have the Member-Secretary of the Centre Pollution Control Board, two scientists, and the Joint Secretary of Plant Protection from the Agriculture Ministry on it.

Report in six weeks

The Bench asked the committee to submit its report in six weeks after undertaking a

scientific study on the question whether the use of endosulfan would cause any serious health hazard to human beings and of its impact on environmental pollution. The panel would also recommend whether endosulfan should be permitted or to be banned completely in human interest.

Last year, the court had banned the manufacture and sale of endosulfan in the country. The Bench faulted the Centre for not giving its views whether the ban should continue or not.

The Bench said, "You can't leave everything to court and say court is exceeding its limit. Why don't you [the Centre] take a clear stand? If we say ban, you say economic crisis, and if we don't ban, then it is human crisis. Either way we are blamed."

The Bench said the committee would also estimate the cost of the existing stock of the pesticide that should be destroyed. It posted the matter for further hearing on November 20.

22 September 2012

Survey to Include Differently Abled in Endosulfan Victims' List

Express News Service

Kasargod: Local bodies neighbouring the 11 endosulfan-affected panchayats in Kasargod seem to have engaged in a wild-goose chase. Following reports that Health Minister V S Sivakumar has recommended inclusion of the differently-abled persons in areas neighbouring the endosulfan-hit regions in the list of victims, the panchayat authorities have begun a survey of such persons.

The move has to be seen against the backdrop that even the implementation of the compensation package in the worst-affected regions is fraught with uncertainty.

"We are not against giving compensation to any victim. But, at first, the authorities

THE MOVE HAS TO BE SEEN AGAINST THE BACKDROP THAT EVEN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPENSATION PACKAGE IN THE WORST-AFFECTED REGIONS IS FRAUGHT WITH UNCERTAINTY

should make sure that each and every affected person in the 11 panchayats is given adequate compensation in time," said activist Ambika-suthan Mangad.

According to Deputy Collector Sudheer Babu, who is in charge of the Endosulfan Rehabilitation Cell in the district, the district administration is yet to receive any government order regarding the matter.

He added that the current list of endosulfan victims prepared for the rehabilitation package includes many

persons who are residing outside the 11 notified panchayats.

While the Mogral Puthur panchayat is requesting for benefits equal to that of the endosulfan victims, the neighbouring Kumbala panchayat has already prepared a list of differently-abled persons within its limits.

It claims that there is high concentration of people with mental and physical disabilities in some areas of the panchayat.

According to Kumbala gra-

ma panchayat president Ramla P H, a survey conducted by the National Programme for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (NPRPD) officials in 2010 found 300 mentally-challenged patients and many more with physical disabilities.

"The survey done by anganwadi workers for the NPRPD had found many differently-abled persons in the panchayat, but it was not documented properly," she said, and added that a panchayat-level survey of disabled persons will be conducted from Monday onwards.

She, however, admitted that some patients in the panchayat have already found place in the endosulfan victims' list.

DECCAN
HERALD

10 October 2012

DECCAN HERALD

Nation

SC asks panel to spell out stand on endosulfan

Apex court concerned at economic impact of ban

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked an expert committee to tell in definite terms if the use of pesticide endosulfan could at all be permitted in the country or it would be in greater human advantage to ban it in entirety.

A bench asked a slew of questions to the committee, including the exact quantity of all forms of endosulfan formulations available in the country.

The court also wanted to know if it was possible to permit the export of the pesticide in case its use was not allowed here.

The Bench sought the response within six weeks while clarifying that it would not give further time to the committee as the PIL, petition seeking permanent ban has been pending for over a year.

The court passed the fresh directions after noting that the committee which consisted of, among others, Director-General, Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) and Commissioner, Agriculture provided no "satisfactory answers."

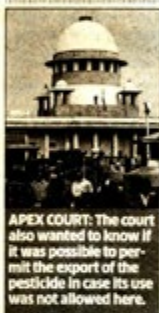
"Needless to say that the matter is pending for over an year, we want a definite stand of Union of India," the court said. The interim order banning use and manufacture of endosulfan was passed on May 13 on the Centre's support.

The committee was told on August 6, last year, to conduct scientific study if the substance caused health hazard or environmental and ecological damage.

During the hearing, the court observed: "If we allow use of endosulfan, it creates human crisis, if we continue with ban, it creates economic crisis." The remarks came after it was pointed out that it is about Rs 1,232 crore would be required for disposing of the existing stocks.

The court decided to add Director-General Health Services, one scientist each from Agriculture Ministry and ICMR and Joint Secretary, Plant Protection, Agriculture Ministry and Member Secretary, Central Pollution Control Board as members of the committee.

Senior counsel Krishnan Venugopal, appearing for PIL



APEX COURT: The court also wanted to know if it was possible to permit the export of the pesticide in case its use was not allowed here.

petitioner Democratic Youth Federation of India, submitted that when report of the committee emanated from the agriculture side, it tried to circumvent the order of the court banning the use of the pesticide.

The director of ICMR could not confirm that there was no consequence on human health due to its use, he said.

Frissing fresh additional issues for consideration, the Bench told the committee to hold its meeting within one week and also inform it in case, the use of endosulfan was not permitted, if it was possible to destroy the available endosulfan and cost, required in it, along with economic ramifications of such a decision.

The court, while posing the matter for passing direction for November 20, said, "We make it clear we will not be inclined to give any further time to government on the matter." The Centre had constituted the joint expert committee having members among others from National Institute of Animal Health, a group of epidemiologists and immunologists to suggest measures on the issue.

The committee submitted its report on August 24 saying that, except in Kerala and Karnataka, the ban might not be imposed because no negative impact of this pesticide on crops, human and animal health and environment had been reported in other states.

DH News Service

THE HINDU

19 October 2012

Kozhikode endosulfan study inconclusive

Member of expert team says it had no proper mandate

S.R. Praveen

KOZHIKODE: The report submitted by an expert team formed by the State government to study the health disorders attributed to the use of endosulfan in a few villages in the district is inconclusive about whether the pesticide had been used in those areas and its after-effects, if any.

A team member who chose to remain anonymous told *The Hindu* here on Thursday that the government, the Agriculture Department including, had not given a proper mandate to the team.

"We were not given any terms of reference. The team did not have a chairman or convener. Initially, not even a competent authority to study the health aspects was present. Two members having experience in the field were added after a request. The six members of the team have met one another only once — on the day of inspection. The report was submitted after suggestions were incorporated through a number of correspondences," the team member said.

The member said a day's field visit had been inadequate to study the issue with several dimensions and arriving at conclusions was difficult.

The team visited the Chakkappara panchayat on May 18. The management of the Perambra Estate of the Plan-

• It is not confirmed when the pesticide had been used

• Protest association expresses reservation

tation Corporation of Kerala, when asked by the team about the duration of application of endosulfan on the estate, said 35 litres each had been applied in 2001 and 2002. Aerial spraying had not been done, and people living in the vicinity or those who sprayed the pesticide were not found to have any illness that could be attributed to the chemical.

Stock register

However, members of the Endosulfan Viruddha Samara Samithi (anti-endosulfan protest association) said the team had ignored the stock register of Krishi Bhavan, which had proof of distribution of endosulfan in these areas from 1970 to 2002.

"The stock registers and a few bottles of endosulfan from the 1970s were given as proof of usage to the team. The District Collector had mentioned in the initial report that endosulfan had been used here from 1970 to 2002. These details are not even mentioned in the report," O.D. Thomas, chairman of the samithi, said.

On the allegation, the team

member said Krishi Bhavans used to distribute small quantities of the pesticide. Large quantities used for aerial spraying had been distributed only through the Plantation Corporation of Kerala.

The team later visited the houses of the persons reported by the media to be victims of endosulfan application. The report says, "[T]he age of the affected people in the six houses visited ranges from seven to 31. Only one member of each family is affected. Parents and other siblings are healthy. Mental retardation was a common finding in all cases."

The samithi alleges that the team did not visit the houses of any of the old plantation workers affected by exposure to endosulfan.

Mr. Thomas said a study conducted by the doctors of the taluk hospital at Perambra had found 295 cases of mental illnesses. But the expert team visited only six households.

The expert team report does not say if the disorders in those six persons are due to the use of endosulfan. The team suggests an elaborate epidemiological survey of the households in the region vis-à-vis a neighbouring panchayat where endosulfan had been not used at all and the results to be compared with the State or national average for incidence for such disabilities.

THE HINDU

22 October 2012

A 100 alternatives to endosulfan

POP review committee recommendation will now go before next CoP

Roy Mathew

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The eighth meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP) Review Committee to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants which concluded in Geneva on Friday approved the assessment of 100 chemical alternatives to endosulfan on Thursday. In a significant departure from past practice, the committee also recommended non-chemical alternatives (to endosulfan).

Of the 110 chemical alternatives assessed for endosulfan, one (dicofol) was set apart for further evaluation because of the possibility that it could also be a persistent organic pollutant.

The committee observed that nine of the alternatives suggested needed further evaluation.

Used in India

The approved chemical alternatives include the pesticides malathion, aldicarb, carbofuran, cabaryl, fipronil, methyl parathion, and pyrethrin which are used in India.

The decisions of the committee, which are recommen-

datory in nature, will now go before the next meeting of the Conference of Parties (CoP) to the Convention to be held in April next year.

The Conference of Parties had decided last year to list technical grade endosulfan and its related isomers for phased elimination, with specific exemptions that included use on multiple crop-pest complexes.

The review committee was asked to support the development and deployment of alternatives to endosulfan.

Green ways

The evaluation of non-chemical alternatives to endosulfan covered ecosystem-based approaches on pest management in farms and technical interventions using natural plant extracts, attractant lures and traps, and biological controls such as pathogens, predators, and parasitoids.

"The focus is on managing the agroecosystem to avoid build-up of pests using cultural, biological, and mechanical methods, instead of synthetic materials. Practices include using resistant varieties better adapted to ecologically based production than



CRITICAL DECISIONS: Members and observers attending the eighth meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP) Review Committee to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants in Geneva recently.

those bred for high-input agriculture, crop diversity, crop rotation, intercropping, optimised planting time and weed management, conserving natural enemies, and managing crop nutrient levels to reduce insect reproduction. Such approaches have shown increased or similar yields, greater returns to farmers,

and an improvement in social and environmental indicators," the document presented to the committee on the assessment said.

The report gave guidance on technical feasibility, a step-wise approach to shifting to ecology-based approaches, and training of farmers.

23 October 2012

Endosulfan case back to square one

Primary question by apex court about its harmful effects remains unanswered

Krishnadas Rajagopal

KOZHIKODE: Formal orders, spanning over a year, passed by the Supreme Court in the public interest petition triggered by the "highly disturbing" photographs of people who may have been affected by the pesticide endosulfan in Kerala show the case has come full circle.

The case, *Democratic Youth Federation of India vs. Union of India*, was first heard on May 2, 2011, by a three-judge bench led by the then Chief Justice of India Justice S.H. Kapadia. Eleven days later, on May 13, 2011, the Bench ordered an "immediate ban" on the pesticide.

In the order, it observed that "some of the studies show that endosulfan is significantly associated with neuro-behavioural disorders, cognitive disorders, hydrocephalus, mental retardation, cortical blindness, seizures, Parkinson's disease".

The order reveals that the

court's cross-country ban on production, use and sale of endosulfan was prompted by the "ill-effects clearly felt in the State of Kerala and its (endosulfan's) use has been completely banned in that State".

The right to life

"We have gone through the report published by the Government of Kerala and the photographs appearing therein are highly disturbing. Right to life, guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India, is the most fundamental of all human rights. Any decision affecting human life, or which may put an individual's life at risk, must call for the most anxious scrutiny," the May 13 order reads.

Forming an expert committee, the court asked the panel to conduct a scientific study and come up with an answer to a "specific" question: "Whether use of endosulfan causes any serious

health hazards to human beings and causes environmental pollution?"

Over a year later, the court admitted in its latest order dated October 9, 2012, that the case is back to square one with the committee failing to come up with any "specific answers". The primary question about the harmful effects of endosulfan on humans and ecology remains unanswered.

"The committee was required to conduct scientific study on the question whether the use of endosulfan would cause any serious health hazards to human beings and would cause environmental pollution. There is no specific answer provided by the Committee in the report filed before this court," a Bench of Justice Swatanter Kumar and Justice M.B. Lohkar observed in the October 9 order.

Unanswered questions

A set of four questions was asked by the Supreme Court for the committee to come up with answers in an order dated August 5, 2011 — total quantity of manufactured endosulfan in the country; the

• Supreme Court seeks answers to four questions

• Committee told to submit report within six weeks

quantity of manufactured endosulfan which can be exported in terms of pending export orders; steps to be taken to dispose of balance manufactured endosulfan; whether destruction of the balance quantity would result in ecological degradation.

On October 9, the court was left with no choice but to increase the number of experts on the committee, and ask more or less the same questions it asked the panel on August 5. Namely, what is the exact quantity of endosulfan available in India as of today; Is it in the greater human and environmental interest to ban use of endosulfan? How much endosulfan in stock can be exported; and can the balance stock of endosulfan be destroyed, what is the economic ramification of such destruction.

The reason the court gives for the repetition in its October 9 order is: "The committee was required to make specific answers to the queries raised in the order dated August 5, 2011. However, no satisfactory answer has been furnished to the court."

The Bench voiced the frustration felt by thousands who may have been affected by the pesticide when it pointed out: "Needless to note that this petition is pending before this court now for years only awaiting a definite view of the Union of India in this regard. Needless to again mention that interim orders had been passed as it was not in the interest of human health or environment to use endosulfan."

The Bench further points out that it cannot help the victims unless backed by scientific evidence about the harmful effects of endosulfan. Giving six weeks, the court expressed a "definite hope" that a report will be placed before it on time as "it is not possible for this court to pass any further directions without having the opinion of the committee before it".

THE HINDU

21 November 2012

Expert committee for use of endosulfan for 2 more years

Says it is unfair to "single out" the pesticide as a health, environmental hazard

J. Venkatesan

NEW DELHI: The use and manufacture of endosulfan pesticide (banned by court since May last year) may be permitted for two years to exhaust all stocks of the raw material, the Joint Expert Committee informed the Supreme Court on Tuesday.

In its report submitted before a Bench of Justices Swatanter Kumar and Madan B. Lokur, the committee said: "India is a signatory to the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions and is committed to discontinuing use of endosulfan over the next five years. All countries which have banned endosulfan have a phase-out plan for its use in agriculture over two to six years. Such a plan has ensured that all stocks available in the country are utilised and exhausted completely within a desirable time frame."

The matter will come up for further hearing next week.

Unfair

Krishnasdas Rajagopal writes from Kozhikode: The committee told the Supreme Court on Tuesday that it was unfair to "single out" the pesticide as a health and environmental hazard, saying it was only so much a killer as other registered pesticides in the country.

The committee set up by the Supreme Court said it had come to this conclusion after exhaustive research and marathon meetings.

It was replying to a specific and rather direct question posed by the Supreme Court: "Will it be in greater human and environmental interest to ban the use of endosulfan in its entirety?"

First, the committee confirms all the health fears

posed by activists in the case *Democratic Youth Federation of India vs. Union of India*, taken up on a public interest litigation petition which prompted a three-judge Bench on May 13, 2011 to order an "immediate ban" on the pesticide.

"Endosulfan has important health hazards/biological effects related to endocrine disruption, carcinogenicity, congenital anomalies and reproductive and neurological abnormalities," it agrees.

But trawling through published literature and peer-reviewed journals to "rationally compare and assess" the ill-effects of endosulfan with other registered pesticides, the committee says, it realised how "13-35 per cent of the registered pesticides are also known to have the above-mentioned health/biological effects to varying degrees."

"Hence, endosulfan alone cannot be singled out for such potential risks," it reasons.

"All pesticides by nature

are toxic compounds and most of these may have certain unwanted effects which have been well documented," the report says.

And pesticides, before they are registered, undergo a "health risk assessment" by the Registration Committee of the Central Insecticide Board, it adds.

Food security

Besides, the committee says pesticides are necessary for the food security of the country.

"The committee was of the view that appropriate use of pesticide (in consonance with good agricultural practices) is essential to ensure adequate production and availability of agricultural commodities for the food security for Indian population," it says.

It informs the Supreme Court that "considering the benefits and potential risks, it was felt that continued use of pesticides is desirable in India."

The committee comprises representatives of the Union Ministry of Agriculture and the Indian Council of Medical Research, along with the Director General of Health Services, the Member Secretary of the Central Pollution Control Board, the Joint Secretary (Plant Protection) and two scientists.

The committee says that taking into consideration international practices, the destruction of available stocks of endosulfan "does not arise."

Instead, the committee suggests using endosulfan further in agriculture for over a limited period of two years as part of a "phase-out plan."

"The Ministry of Agriculture said that in India, if no further import of raw material is allowed, the existing stocks should be depleted within a period of two years after its manufacture... The committee felt that to exhaust the available stocks of the raw materials, manufac-

ture and use of endosulfan may be permitted for a total period of two years," it says.

Safeguards

As safeguards, the committee suggests that manufacturers be asked to exhaust their stock in this period. Company labels and containers should clearly mention that endosulfan cannot be used beyond two years.

"It is not feasible to destroy large quantities of raw materials with the manufacturers and pesticide formulations lying with various agencies," it says.

The court's poser was "whether it is possible to destroy the entire balance of endosulfan in any form or raw material," and that too, at what cost.

"Disposal of existing stocks of endosulfan in existing incinerators may take a long duration because of the limited capacity, and the cost of disposal will be exorbitant," it says.

CPI demands withdrawal of affidavit

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: CPI State secretary Pannian Ravindran said here on Tuesday that the Central government should seek withdrawal of affidavit submitted by the expert committee before the Supreme Court recommending continued sale and use of endosulfan for two years.

In a statement here, he said the Central Ministers from Kerala should put pressure on the Union

government. The statement of Agriculture Minister K.P. Mohan that the State's views were not taken into account by the committee should be viewed seriously.

Mr. Ravindran added that as agriculture was a State subject, the Supreme Court should be considering the State's views. Hence, the Kerala government should seek withdrawal of the affidavit filed without considering its opinion.

Educational assistance

The State government has

sanctioned Rs.60.87 lakh for providing educational assistance to endosulfan-affected families.

Minister for Panchayats and Social Welfare M.K. Muneer will inaugurate the disbursement of the assistance at Uppala in Kasaragod district on November 22.

The Kerala Social Welfare Mission, which is providing the assistance, had received 2,292 applications for aid. The Minister will hand over the assistance to 12 children on Thursday. Assistance will

be sent to others the same day by electronic money order, an official release said on Tuesday.

Children studying in standards 1 to 7 will get Rs.2,000 for the academic year 2012-13 while high school students will get Rs.3,000.

The assistance for students studying for Plus One and Plus Two courses will be Rs.4,000 a year. The beneficiaries from primary school level number 1,362 while those from high school classes number 645.

26 November 2012

Endosulfan: Opposition to meet Chandy

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Left Democratic Front (LDF) leaders led by Leader of the Opposition V.S. Achuthanandan will meet Chief Minister Oommen Chandy on Monday to seek a better deal for endosulfan victims.

The Opposition wants the government to provide compensation, recommended by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), to all the victims of endosulfan. Till now, the compensation has been given to only about 1,600 bed-ridden and mentally challenged victims, whereas the pesticide has seriously

affected more than 6,000 persons in Kasaragod district.

Leader of the CPI Legislature Party C. Divakaran told *The Hindu* on Sunday that the government was yet to fully implement the recommendations of the NHRC regarding rehabilitation and remediation of endosulfan victims. Proper employment schemes for the affected families were yet to be worked out. Assistance was being denied to kidney and cancer patients on the ground that the diseases were not caused by endosulfan. Mr. Divakaran said the LDF did not agree with the recommendation of the expert committee of the

Supreme Court that the existing stocks of raw materials should be used to make endosulfan, and that the use of the pesticide should be permitted for two years. The committee itself had admitted that the pesticide caused serious health problems, the CPI leader said.

Ration subsidy

He said the LDF would convey to the Chief Minister its opposition to the proposal to disburse ration subsidy through banks. The scheme would force cardholders to run from ration shop to the bank and back. Ration cardholders would be so inconven-

ieniented that it would ultimately undermine the public distribution system. If corruption was the problem, the government should use the existing anti-corruption machinery to prevent it.

Aadhaar cards opposed

He said the LDF would also object to the introduction of Aadhaar cards in schools for disbursement of scholarships and other benefits. The Central scheme was not suitable for a State such as Kerala which had achieved considerable progress in the field of education. The scheme was meant for States such as Bihar.

The Indian EXPRESS

21 November 2012

ONLY 101 ENDOSULFAN VICTIMS GIVEN COMPENSATION'

T'Puram: The CPI state council which met here on Saturday has urged the government to stop its alleged indifference to the victims of endosulfan in Kasargod.

In a statement here, the council said that only 101 persons have been given compensation till date.

The Human Rights Commission had recommended to give ₹5 lakh each to 24,536 victims, who were seriously ill or mentally retarded. It had also recommended to give ₹3 lakh each to other kind of victims. Despite giving financial aid, the government is now looking for a re-examination into the issue. The government had also informed the Human Rights Commission in May 2012 that the assistance was distributed to all the victims, which was against the truth.

ENS

State Firm on Endosulfan Ban: Agriculture Minister

Express News Service

T'Puram: Agriculture Minister K P Mohanan on Tuesday said that the state was firm on its stand seeking a total ban on endosulfan. He also said that the expert committee appointed by the Supreme Court had not sought the opinion of the state in this regard.

"There is ban on the use of endosulfan in the state. We stick to this stand," he said. Moreover, he said, the government was not aware of the report of the expert committee.

An expert committee appointed by the Supreme Court had ruled that the endosulfan stocks lying unused in the country could be used

for two more years.

Kerala and Karnataka are in the forefront of the anti-endosulfan campaign.

The expert committee was asked to undertake a scientific study to find out whether the use of endosulfan would cause any serious health hazard to human beings and its impact on environment.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

21 November 2012

29 November 2012

Experts want endosulfan ban lifted

'Allow Phasing Out In 2 Years'

Dhananjay Mahapatra / iNews

New Delhi: An expert body asked with examining the line of controversial pesticide endosulfan on Tuesday informed the Supreme Court that the most feasible way of phasing it out was to exhaust the stock of raw material by allowing manufacture, sale and use of the pesticide.

Additional solicitor general Gourab Banerjee handed over the response of the joint expert committee in the agriculture ministry and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to a bench of justices Swaminathan Kumar and Madan Lokur. The bench reserved order on the suggestions.

The court had on May 13 last year ordered a complete ban on the manufacture, sale and use of endosulfan after a PIL by the Democratic Youth Federation of India through advocate Deepak Prakash had brought to the court's notice the hazardous effects of the pesticide on human and plant life in Kerala, Karnataka and other states.

But the expert committee in its report to the apex court said almost all pesticides used

The committee said appropriate use of the pesticide was essential to ensure adequate production and availability of agricultural commodities for the country's food security

in India had adverse health and biological effects, and that endosulfan could not be singled out as a rogue pesticide. It also advocated that for increased food grain production, the key to India's food security, use of pesticides was essential. Arguing for continued use of pesticides, the committee said if no further import of raw material for endosulfan was permitted, then existing stock would be exhausted in two years.

"Taking into consideration all facts, the committee felt that to exhaust the available stocks of the raw material, manufacture and use of endosulfan may be permitted for a total period of two years," it said and disagreed with the suggestion for destruction of available stock of endosulfan raw material.

Non-deserving people in list: HC seeks govt stance

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: The state government should inform its stance on alleged inclusion of non-deserving persons in the compensation list of endosulfan victims, the Kerala high court ordered on Wednesday.

The order by justice TR Ramachandran Nair was during the admission hearing on a petition filed by M Gangadharan Nair, secretary of PCK Samrakshana Samithi. The court ordered the chief secretary and district collector of Kasargod to file reports explaining the state government's stance within two weeks.

According to the petitioner, the re-categorized list of endosulfan victims, which contains more than 4,000 persons, includes persons who are suffering from ailments not related to endosulfan exposure such as asthma, traffic accident victims, and ENT problems. Along with recommending a compensation for endosulfan victims, the National Human Rights Com-



AWAITING JUSTICE

mission (NHRC) had categorized the victims into four groups: bedridden, deceased, mentally-challenged, and those with other disabilities.

ENDOSULFAN CASE

Though the state government accepted the NHRC's recommendation for compensation, it had drawn up a separate list than the one forwarded by the commission in the name of re-categorizing. The decision to re-categorize victims was taken at a meeting held at Thiruvananthapuram on July 24 this year. The aim of re-categorization was declared as an effort to match the government's list with the one provided by NHRC.

The petitioner has pointed out that a total of Rs 32 crore has been handed over to the state government by the Plantation Corporation of Kerala, a public sector company promoting cash crops that landed in trouble for aerial spraying of endosulfan, an insecticide that is being phased out globally for its adverse health effects.

Following NHRC's intervention, the state government had agreed to pay Rs 5 lakh for bedridden endosulfan victims in 11 panchayats of Kasargod. A survey conducted by the state government in October last year had revealed that the number of endosulfan victims in the 11 panchayats comes to more than 2,000.

Activists had alleged at Kasargod that the re-categorization is aimed at excluding victims from the scope of the compensation package.

THE HINDU

08 December 2012

23 December 2012

Endosulfan victims to write to NHRC

Two years since NHRC directive, only 101 got aid

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: The endosulfan victims in the district under the banner of the Endosulfan Peeditha Janakeeya Munnani has decided to send letters to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to draw its attention to their plight on the World Human Rights Day on December 10.

They would demand the commission to ensure that all deserving persons got the promised relief and rehabilitation package.

The victims or their families would post letters to the NHRC from their respective localities with copies of their identity cards. The format for the letter had been drafted by the forum and handed over to the respective families in envelopes addressed to the NHRC, forum convener Ambalathara Kunhikrishnan said here on Friday.

A group of people would converge on the new bus station premises here and take out a march to the General Post Office to post the letters en masse, Mr. Kunhikrishnan

- 'Several genuine victims omitted from NHRC-approved list'
- 1,612 to be paid part of the aid next week: Dy. Collector

He said the government had deceived the victims by deciding to revise the list of victims and by omitting several deserving persons with serious ailments from the NHRC-approved list.

Rights violation

"The NHRC had in December 2010 directed the government to pay Rs.5 lakh each as compensation to the families of 2,453 victims, either dead or bed-ridden, and Rs.3 lakh each to 1,729 victims with serious ailments within eight weeks. However, the revision only ensured denial of rightful compensation to the victims by excluding many genuine cases," he alleged.

"This is a clear case of violating the human rights as only 101 families of victims

given compensation two years since the NHRC recommendation," he said adding that each victim would write to NHRC about the indifferent attitude of the State government and district authorities concerned.

Government version

Meanwhile, Deputy Collector K. Sudheer Babu said that the as many as 101 victims in the totally bedridden category were paid Rs.1.5 lakh each as first the instalment of the Rs.5 lakh compensation, as suggested by the NHRC. "Another 1,612 victims, including physically challenged and mentally challenged persons and 54 bedridden victims, who were not paid Rs.1.5 lakh in the first phase will be paid the same by next week," he said.

The officials said that four categories — kin of deceased, totally bedridden, mentally challenged and physically challenged — would be paid compensation initially and a decision regarding compensation to the 2,557 had been submitted before the State government.

Endosulfan victim dead

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: Thriveni, 19, an endosulfan victim, succumbed to her diseases on Friday.

Thriveni is the daughter of Sreenivasa Naik and Sharada residing at Mukkampara near Badiadka. The girl's name figured on the official list of endosulfan victims in the district.

Thriveni had been battling for life after she was afflicted with diseases suspected to be caused by the spraying of endosulfan in the cashew estates of the Plantation Corporation of Kerala.

UNKNOWN

Endosulfan: two more dead

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: Two persons, including a seven-year-old girl, became the latest victims of the prolonged aerial spraying of endosulfan pesticide in the State-owned Plantation Corporation of Kerala's cashew estates here sometime back.

Fathmath Safna, daughter

of Sulaiman and Beefathima of Muthalapara in Muliya village, and Parvathi, a 58-year old housewife from Periy, died on Saturday, sources here said. Safna, mentally and physically retarded from birth, had been undergoing prolonged treatment. Parvathi had been suffering from cancer.

THE HINDU

12 January 2013

KAU scientists challenge studies on impact of endosulfan

Allege flaws and inconsistencies in surveys held in Kasargod

T. Nandakumar

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Two scientists from Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) have come out with a report highlighting serious flaws and inconsistencies in two independent epidemiological studies carried out in the endosulfan-affected areas in Kasargod.

Authored by K.M. Sreekumar, entomologist at the College of Agriculture, Palanakkad, and K.D. Prathapan of the College of

Agriculture, Vellayani, the report, published in the latest online edition of the Current Science journal of research, alleges major lapses in the analysis of endosulfan residues, lack of clarity in the incidence of physical disability, biased findings about change in sex ratio, and absence of data to substantiate higher incidence of cancer.

First study

Covering 1,000 respondents in five affected panchayats, the first study by the

Department of Environmental Sciences, Pondicherry University, was carried out in 2008-09 by a team led by A.K. Endershield.

Another study by Prabha-kumar and co-workers from the Government Medical College, Kozhikode, in 2010, was submitted to the Union government by the State.

The report by the two KAU scientists flags the study by the Pondicherry University team, describing it as amateurish, prima facie unreliable, and based on a totally flawed methodology.

The study had not been designed properly nor was any statistical tool adopted for

analysis and interpretation of data, it said.

The sample size of 1,000 was too small to derive any meaningful conclusion, and the health problems of the people in the affected areas were not compared with that of an unaffected population.

The report said it was totally absurd to make comparisons between various categories of age to assess the impact of endosulfan.

The critique of the medical college study observes that the comparative study of the health problems in two villages was not based on adequate number of representative samples. "No attempt was made to compare the pesticide residue in blood plasma from 41 subjects in 11 panchayats with those from the reference population. Mass spectroscopy was not employed to confirm the results, a practice recommended by the Central government,"

Chromatograms of the pesticide residue analysis of blood serum accessed by the two scientists by invoking the RTI Act revealed that the readings agreed with values of only four of the 41 samples.

Social realities

The report said the inference on reproductive health events in women had not taken social realities into account and there was no statistical comparison between the data generated during the period of pesticide application (1980 to 2000) and the period after.

It also highlighted the inconsistencies in the data generated by the two surveys on the prevalence of mental retardation and cancer.

Alleging opportunistic use of scientific claims, the paper said it was clear that the un-surveyed and surveyed areas did not differ much in terms of the occurrence of diseases or disabilities.

"This vital information has been hidden from public view. The 2001 Census data shows that Kasargod does not have an increased rate of mental or physical disabilities compared to other districts."

The published report said no criterion, clinical or biochemical, was applied for the

selection of victims of endosulfan spraying. "Persons with all types of common diseases and those living 10 to 15 km away from the endosulfan areas are included in the list of victims to avail of free medical aid and financial benefits."

It said the propaganda and fear-mongering was taking a toll on the lives of the people in Kasargod in general and those living in the affected areas in particular.

The report called for a comprehensive, multidisciplinary study to bring out the true picture of the issue that shook the conscience of the whole world.

The Indian EXPRESS

09 January 2013

19 February 2013

States Told to File Response on Endosulfan

Express News Service

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed all State Governments, which are yet to respond on the endosulfan issue, to file their response and posted the matter to February 19 for final hearing.

A Bench comprising Chief Justice Altamas Kabir, Justice J. Chelameswar and Justice Vikramjit Sen, which heard arguments on the petition filed by the Democratic Youth Federation of India, also directed that the Central Pollution Control Board be made a party. Senior counsel Krishnan Venugopal, appearing for the petitioners, apprised the Bench of the orders passed earlier imposing an interim ban on the production, sale and use of endosulfan in India. He also mentioned how endosulfan had caused havoc in Kerala claiming lives and causing damage to the environment.

The counsel further stated that the expert committee constituted had, in its interim report, stated that endosulfan caused serious harm to human health. The apex court had allowed export of endosulfan that had already been manufactured. However, senior counsel Ja-hangir Mistry, appearing for the Pesticides Manufacturers & Formulations Association, told the Bench that other pesticides also cause identical harm. Therefore, without permitting fresh import of raw material, the existing stocks of raw materials should be allowed to be used to manufacture endosulfan and the stock of manufactured endosulfan should be allowed to be utilized in the country, he said.

Another point Mistry made is that the existing stock would expire within three months — by May 31, 2013 — and therefore, the interim ban on endosulfan should be lifted. Additional Solicitor General Gourab Banerjee told the Bench that it would be enormously expensive to dispose of the expired stock and therefore, the court should permit it to be utilized.

The Chief Justice replied saying the ban was a temporary one.

Endosulfan Victims Re-launch Indefinite Hunger Strike

Express News Service

Kasargod: Veteran journalist B R P Bhaskar inaugurated the indefinite hunger strike launched by the Endosulfan Peeditha Janakeeya Munnani on the new bus stand premises here on Monday.

He opined that the insolent attitude of the government towards the issues faced by the endosulfan victims in the district has forced the victims to re-launch the agitation.

"The endosulfan tragedy which hit thousands of lives in the district was the result of the irresponsible use of pesticides by the Plantation Corporation of Kerala (PCK), a public enterprise, and the government is liable to pay the damages. Though many compensation packages were announced, the government

has not shown sincerity in implementing the rehabilitation activities," he said.

Bhaskar also opined that the people need to assert their rights until they are heard to find a solution to any issue.

"The hunger strike is such an effort. The government had agreed to most of the demands raised by the Munnani, in principle, but they were never implemented," he said. "The government needs to show more sincerity in its efforts to solve the problems of endosulfan victims," Bhaskar added.

The relay hunger strike has been re-launched in protest against the delay in the implementation of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)-recommended compensation package and omission of a number of deserving vic-

tims from the list. A hunger strike by the mothers of victims that lasted for 130 days was called off in last August following assurance from the chief minister that the government would look into their demands.

The demands raised by the Munnani include formation of a tribunal, inclusion of all deserving people in the endosulfan victims' list, upgradation of medical facilities in the endosulfan-hit regions and loan waiver. Munnani president T Shobhana, convener Ambalathara Kunhikrishnan and activists including Ambika-suthan Mangad, A Mohan Kumar, Dr D Surendran Nath, Dr E Unnikrishnan, C M A Jaleel, BJP district general secretary Shreekanth and CPI district Secretary Govindan Pallikkappil were present at the programme.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

21 February 2013

TIMES STATE

Aid to endosulfan victims soon: Govt

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: Steps have been taken to provide compensation to endosulfan victims as recommended by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the state government has informed the high court. The government's submission was in response to a November 28, 2012, directive of the high court.

The state said in an affidavit that it was not against im-

The state govt had sought Rs 250 crore from the Centre to implement NHRC's recommendations

plementing all the recommendations of the NHRC on the compensation issue.

The government's priority has been the health and security of the people, which led to the decision to ban endosul-

fan, N Nandakumar, secretary of health and family welfare department, said in the affidavit.

Petitions pending before the high court have been demanding—among others—compensation and rehabilitation package for victims, setting up of tribunals to decide on compensation cases and the proper implementation of endosulfan ban.

NHRC had recommended a compensation of Rs 5 lakh

each for the dependents of victims who had died as well as for those who has been bedridden due to exposure to endosulfan.

Additionally, the NHRC had also recommended a compensation of Rs 3 lakh each to those handicapped by the lethal insecticide.

Other measures suggested were conducting surveys to identify affected persons, extending relief measures to include maximum number of

victims, and medical and financial aid to the victims. State government had sought Rs 250 crore from the Centre to implement NHRC's recommendations, as well as another Rs 235.33 crore to implement its own measures. However, the Centre rejected Kerala's request, saying funds could not be granted to compensate for a tragedy caused by a pesticide manufactured by a state-owned company. The Centre asked the state to raise funds.

THE HINDU

25 February 2013

Mothers of endosulfan victims to join fast

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: With mothers of endosulfan-affected people joining a fast here on Monday, the protest demanding the quick implementation of a rehabilitation package for the victims is expected to intensify. The agitators plan to block the National Highway.

As the fast entered the seventh day on Sunday, two activists became critically ill. Doctors advised the leaders to shift them to hospital.

The Endosulfan Peedhitha Janakeeya Munnani, a people's front for the victims, is leading the protest.

The district administration is yet to initiate talks on implementing the package recommended by the National Human Rights Commission, though the District Collector

has promised to take up the demand with the State government, Ambalathara Kunhikrishnan, convener of the front, said.

Support

Political, social and environmental leaders have been supporting the protest. K. Surendran, general secretary of the Bharatiya Janata Party State unit, inaugurated the programmes for Sunday. The Congress(S) leader Kadanappally Ramachandran visited the protesters.

P. Karunakaran, MP; E. Chandrasekharan, MLA; K.P. Sathesh Chandran, secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) district unit; and social and environmental activists have visited the protest venue, near the new bus station, in the previous days.



WITH STEELY DETERMINATION: Activists of a people's front for endosulfan victims continuing their seven-day-old fast in Kasaragod on Sunday.

THE HINDU

26 February 2013

Endosulfan victims scale up their protest

Mothers block traffic on National Highway in Kasaragod



Mothers of endosulfan victims block the National Highway near the new bus station in Kasaragod on Monday as part of an ongoing indefinite hunger strike spearheaded by the Endosulfan Peedhitha Janakeeya Munnani.

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: Mothers of endosulfan victims and other protesters blocked the National Highway near the new bus station here on Monday, intensifying an agitation demanding the implementation of a rehabilitation package for those affected by the pesticide.

Activists continued their fast that started on February 18, and the health of Subhash Cheemeni and P. Krishnan continued to deteriorate. Doctors from General Hospital examined them, but they refused to get admitted to the hospital.

Inaugurating the road blockade, Muneesa, who lost vision from the impact of endosulfan, criticised the move

to suspend the relief and rehabilitation measures.

She said any compensation, even the Rs. 5 lakh recommended by the recommended by the National Human Rights Commission for the bedridden and the families of those who died from diseases caused by the pesticide, would in no way mitigate the agony of hundreds of victims.

Grim scene

"In such a grim scene, it is not clear why the government is insisting on suspending the relief measures after five years," she said.

The protesters criticised the government for going slow on paying the compensation and trying to remove the names of many victims

from the list of those eligible. They urged the government to conduct medical camps for critically ill patients living outside the 11 worst-affected panchayats in the district.

Ambalathara Kunhikrishnan, convener of the Endosulfan Peedhitha Janakeeya Munnani, a people's front for the affected people, expressed dismay at the "reluctance" of the district authorities to hold talks with the protesters.

District Collector P.S. Mohammed Sagir, who is in Thiruvananthapuram to attend an official meeting, told *The Hindu* that the administration had drawn the attention of the State government to the grievances. The government's assurance on solving them was yet to come.

THE HINDU

05 March 2013

Stir for endosulfan victims continues

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: The police on Monday arrested and hospitalised environmentalist D. Surendranath, who has been observing fast as part of an indefinite strike launched by the Endosulfan Peedhitha Janakeeya Munnani (EPJM) here, as his health condition deteriorated following the week-long fast. The strike entered the 15th day on Monday.

Dr. Surendranath was shifted to the General Hospital here around 3.30 p.m. on Monday, EPJM convener Ambalathara Kunhikrishnan said.

Veteran environmentalist A. Mohan Kumar, who led the 'Save Western Ghats' march a quarter a century ago, replaced the phy-



Sreeja Neyyattinkara, State secretary, Welfare Party, inaugurating the 15th day's hunger strike of the Endosulfan Peedhitha Janakeeya Munnani seeking an effective rehabilitation package for endosulfan victims, in Kasaragod on Monday.

sician-turned-environmental activist.

Earlier, the day 15 of the hunger strike, launched by the EPJM

on February 18, was inaugurated by Welfare Party State secretary Sreeja Neyyattinkara in the morning.

Mr. Kunhikrishnan reiterated the demand for the formal acceptance of the various demands raised by the agitating EPJM activists to ensure effective and speedy rehabilitation of the hundreds of endosulfan victims and their families. The demands included swift disbursement of the National Human Rights Commission-recommended package for all the deserving victims and continued assistance to the affected victims besides holding special medical camps to identify victims residing outside the 11 'recognised' endosulfan-affected panchayat limits.

The EPJM also demanded setting up of a tribunal to decide on the actual quantum of relief to ensure decent rehabilitation of the marginalised sections.

08 March 2013

Clarify on cell formed for endosulfan victims, State told

Special Correspondent

KOCHI: A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court on Thursday directed the State government to file an affidavit clarifying the points raised by the Kasaragod District Collector regarding the formation of a Kasaragod district-level cell for coordinating rehabilitation and welfare measures of endosulfan victims.

The Bench comprising Chief Justice Manjula Chellur and Justice K. Vinod Chandran also directed the government to inform it the number of meetings held by the district-level cell after its formation. The court ordered that the affidavit be filed within two weeks.

The directives came on a writ petition seeking a directive to the government to take follow-up actions on the welfare and rehabilitation measures of the endosulfan victims.

In his petition, B.C. Kumaran of Kasaragod said that the government order forming the district-level cell was issued on October 15, 2011.

However, there had not been any follow-up action since then. The cell was headed by the Agricultural Minister and the Kasaragod District Collector was its convener. In fact, the Collector had sought certain clarifications on the members included in the cell. The cell, therefore, had not been met even once and no welfare measure had been implemented. The petitioner also alleged that the Centre

had not provided any funds for giving compensation to the victims.

Earlier, the government had said in a statement that it had taken earnest steps to identify the real victims and rehabilitate them. The government was also ready to award the compensation as suggested by the National Human Rights Commission. The commission had recommended a compensation of

Rs.5 lakh each to the dependents of those who had died as well as to those who have been bedridden due to exposure to endosulfan. The commission had also recommended a compensation of Rs.3 lakh each to those who sustained severe injuries. The government also submitted that measures such as free ration, medical treatment etc. had been provided to endosulfan victims.

Chandy convenes meet on March 25

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: Chief Minister Oommen Chandy will convene a meeting in Thiruvananthapuram on March 25 to discuss the issues raised by the Endosulfan Peedhitha Janakeeya Munnani (EPJM).

People's representatives, including P.Karunakaran, MP, MLAs, district panchayat president P.P. Shyamala Devi, will meet

Mr. Chandy at the Secretariat at 5 p.m.

Hunger stir

Meanwhile, an indefinite hunger strike called by the EPJM entered the 8th day on Thursday.

It was also agreed to invite to the meeting representatives of the agitating activists to assess the problems faced by endosulfan victims and their families, most of them in remote hamlets in the

district. A decision to this effect was taken at a KPCC-government coordination committee meeting in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday, sources here said.

The decision to hold the meeting comes days after senior Congress leader V.M. Sudheeran urged the Chief Minister to convene a review meeting to ensure more transparency and clarity in the rehabilitation measures for the victims.

THE HINDU

19 March 2013

Human wall formed to highlight cause of endosulfan victims

Hunger strike protest completes a month



SHOULDER TO SHOULDER: A human wall formed in Kasaragod on Monday to mark the completion of one month of a fast for the cause of endosulfan victims.

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: As the indefinite hunger strike for the cause of endosulfan victims in the district completed a month here on Monday, people formed a human wall to protest against the alleged laxity of the State government in rehabilitating the affected population.

Inaugurating the protest, Ambalathara Muneesa, a victim born without sight who has two postgraduate degrees, sought the resignation of N.A. Nellikunnu and P.B. Abdul Razak, MLAs from the

district, for the alleged callous approach of the government.

Activists of 20 organisations, including the Bharatiya Janata Yuv Morcha, the All India Youth Federation, the Samsat Students Federation, the Socialist Democratic Party of India, the National Youth League, the Students Islamic Organisation, the Kerala Vyapari Vyavasthaya Ekspansa Samithi and the Kooda Sastha Sahitya Parishad, were part of the human wall near the new bus station premises.

Fifty mothers of endosulfan victims burned copies of the State Budget to protest against what they termed meagre allocations for the victims.

Protest meetings were held across the State to express solidarity with the Endosulfan Peedhitha Janakeeya Munnani, a people's front for the victims, which is leading the protests.

Debates were held in Mumbai and New Delhi where Medha Patkar, environmental activist, spoke at a function, the activists said.

21 March 2013

Endosulfan: talks with Chandy today

Formal discussion on Monday

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: As the indefinite hunger strike seeking swift and comprehensive rehabilitation of endosulfan victims in the district entered 31st day on Wednesday, a five-member delegation of agitating activists will hold preliminary talks with Chief Minister Oommen Chandy in Thiruvananthapuram on Thursday ahead of the formal talks scheduled on Monday.

A delegation led by Ambalathara Kunhikrishnan, convener of the Endosulfan Peedhitha Janakeeya Munnani, which has been spearheading the hunger strike, along with three women activists, would hold talks with Mr. Chandy in his office.

A delegation comprising P. Karunakaran, MP, local MLAs, district panchayat president P.P. Shyamala Devi, senior officials and represen-

• Indefinite hunger strike entered 31st day on Wednesday

• Hospitalised activist continuing strike

tatives of voluntary organisations would hold formal talks with Mr. Chandy on March 25 in a bid to end the stalemate following complaints of shortcomings in the relief package for victims. Activist K. Ajitha, who visited the strike venue on Wednesday, urged the authorities to accord top priority to solving the endosulfan victims' problems. Meanwhile, environmentalist A. Mohan Kumar, who was hospitalised as his health condition got deteriorated after 16 days of hunger strike on Tuesday, was said to be continuing his strike in the hospital.

20 March 2013

SAT, MARCH 23, 2013

Meeting to discuss issues of endosulfan victims

All stakeholders to participate in meet on March 25

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The government will hold a high-level meeting on March 25 to discuss the problems being faced by the endosulfan victims in Kasaragod, Chief Minister Oommen Chandy has said.

Replying to a calling attention motion by E. Chandrasekharan in the Assembly on Tuesday, Mr. Chandy said the local MP, all MLAs in the district, district panchayat president, and members of the action council, who were holding a fast to press for the demands of the victims, would be invited for the meeting.

The government was committed to providing all amenities including financial assistance and medical care for the victims in a time-bound manner, as recommended by the National Human Rights Commission, Mr. Chandy said.

The assistance had already been provided to 1,662 victims, he added.

Mr. Chandy also urged environmental activist Mohan

Kumar, who is on a fast seeking action to support the victims, to call off the fast.

Activist shifted

Staff Reporter writes from Kasaragod: A. Mohan Kumar, an environmentalist who has been on a fast here for 16 days for the cause of endosulfan victims, was shifted to hospital on Tuesday as his health deteriorated.

In his place, schoolchildren from Thrissur who visited him went on a fast till late in the evening. The police and health officials shifted Mr. Mohan Kumar to General Hospital. He is continuing the fast in hospital.

The students and teachers from Salsabil Green School at Kizhore in Thrissur district remained with Mr. Mohan Kumar for some time, Ambalathara Kunhikrishnan, convener of the front, said. After he was shifted, they started the fast.

The hunger strike, led by the Endosulfan Peedhitha Janakeeya Munnani, a people's front seeking better rehabilitation of endosulfan victims, crossed a month on Tuesday.



Environmentalist A. Mohan Kumar being shifted to General Hospital in Kasaragod on Tuesday after his health condition turned worse, 16 days after he began a hunger strike.

THE HINDU

22 March 2013

Endosulfan: stir to continue as talks fail

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Endosulfan Peedhitha Janakeeya Munnani has announced that it will go ahead with its agitation following failure of talks held with Chief Minister Oommen Chandy here on Thursday.

The Munnani convenor Ambalathara Kunhikrishnan told *The Hindu* that the Chief Minister had conceded hardly any of their demands. Regarding conduct of another medical camp to identify fresh victims, Mr. Chandy had only promised a decision at the next round of talks on Monday.

So far, assistance recommended by the National Human Rights Commission had been provided to only more than 1,000 victims. The Chief Minister had maintained that assistance to as many as 4,158 victims identified earlier could be assured only after conducting studies.

An official release said the State government was favourably considering demands of the agitators, and final decisions would be taken at the meeting called on Monday. There was no cause for concern over continued payment of pensions. The Chief Minister had assured that all possible relief would be pro-

vided to the victims.

Agriculture Minister K. P. Mohanan told the media after the meeting that the decision to discontinue rehabilitation and remediation programmes after five years had been withdrawn. All eligible persons in the 27 affected panchayats would be screened for assistance.

Organic farming

He noted that the government had already adopted an organic farming policy. This would be implemented in a year. A decision on waiver of loans of the victims, and setting up of a tribunal to decide compensation would be de-

cided at the meeting on Monday. Revenue recovery procedures would also be suspended. He said studies would be conducted to determine whether endosulfan had caused cancer, heart diseases and kidney problems in the district. Assistance would be provided to such patients if their diseases were caused by endosulfan.

The meeting was attended by Opposition Leader V.S. Achuthanandan, Ministers M.K. Muneer, Manjalamkuzhi Ali, V.S. Sivakumar, and K. P. Mohanan, and members of the Assembly and other political leaders besides representatives of the Munnani.

The Indian EXPRESS

22 March 2013

Endosulfan Victims: Final Decision on March 25, Says CM

Express News Service

T'Puram: The State Government will take a final decision regarding the relief measures for endosulfan victims on March 25, Chief Minister Oommen Chandy said on Thursday.

Chandy was addressing a meeting held here to discuss the issue. The government will continue with the aid provided to the victims and they need not have any worries regarding their pension, he said.

Agriculture Minister K P

The meeting on March 25 will also take decisions regarding waiver of debts run up by the victims

Mohanan said that the government has withdrawn the decision to stop the aid after five years. All eligible victims in the 27 panchayats in the affected region will be examined. The meeting on March 25 will also take decisions regarding waiver of debts

run up by the victims and the establishment of a tribunal to hear their pleas, he said.

Patients in Kasargod district suffering from cancer and kidney and heart ailments will be examined and they too will be included in the list of victims if endosulfan is found to be the cause.

Opposition Leader V S Achuthanandan, ministers M K Muneer, Manjalamkuzhi Ali, V S Sivakumar, K P Mohanan, representatives of endosulfan victims and senior political leaders attended the meeting.

THE HINDU

24 March 2013

End woes of endosulfan victims: Benoy

Staff Reporter

MALAPPURAM: Communist Party of India (CPI) national council member and former Minister for Forests Benoy Viswom has criticised the government's approach towards an ongoing hunger strike by the victims of endosulfan in Kasaragod.

Addressing newsmen here on Saturday, Mr. Viswom said that the government's stance had made a blot on the image of Kerala as a civilised and literate State. He demanded that the government take measures to end the agitation by the victims and those expressing solidarity with them.

"The government is incriminating itself by prolonging the agitation," he said.

The CPI leader demanded that the government led by Oommen Chandy should make its stand clear on the five-year clause included in an assurance of treatment offered by the government to the victims. "If, as per the government claim, the five-year stipulation of treatment and other aid to victims was a typographical error, then it can be corrected in five minutes. Why can't the government do it then?" he asked.

He said that limiting government aid and treatment to victims to only five years was

disastrous. "What are they (victims) supposed to do after five years?" he asked.

Mr. Viswom accused the United Democratic Front (UDF) government of cheating the victims. "This is not an issue of Kasaragod alone," he said, calling upon the people to react. He disputed the claims made by Agriculture Minister K.P. Mohanan about the number of victims identified by the government. Mr. Mohanan had said that there were a little more than 1,000 people affected by endosulfan in Kasaragod.

CPI district secretary P.P. Suneer also accompanied Mr. Viswom.

25 March 2013

Endosulfan issue will be resolved: Chandy

Special Correspondent

KUTTYAKK: Chief Minister Oommen Chandy has expressed confidence that the outstanding issues related to the endosulfan-affected persons will be resolved at a high-level meeting convened in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday.

He was speaking to media persons who met him at Puthappally on Sunday.

The Chief Minister called for speedy conclusion of the legal process against the Italian marines who, according to him, should get suitable punishment for the crime.

He had called for setting up a special court in Kollam so that the witnesses, officials, and law officers could have avoided the hassle of travelling long distance.

However, the government would go by the directive of the Supreme Court and would fight the case to bring the accused to book, he said.

Appeal

Special Correspondent adds from Thiruvananthapuram: Prominent people from various walks of life have urged the State government

• Victims entitled to compensation under international law

• PCK move to seek damages halted

to urgently set up a tribunal to provide compensation to endosulfan victims.

In a signed appeal, CPI leader Benoy Viswom, N.K. Prensachandran, K. Kutty Ahmed Kutty, among others, urged the government to consider promulgating an ordinance that would incorporate the National Human Rights Commission's (NHRC) observations in a case that came up before it. The appeal, which was released for publication here on Sunday, said the victims were entitled to compensation under the International laws, Indian Constitution and the verdict of the NHRC. The decision of the Plantation Corporation of Kerala to move court to seek compensation from the endosulfan manufacturers was a welcome move and the State government should not delay giving permission to the company to move in this direction.

The Indian EXPRESS

25 March 2013

'Occupy Kasargod' Protest in Support of Endosulfan Stir

Express News Service

Kasaragod: As the all-party meeting to find a solution to the endosulfan issue takes place in the state capital, the Endosulfan Peeditha Janakeeya Munnani (EPJM) plans 'Occupy Kasargod', a rare ensemble of activists, artists, civil society members and students here on Monday. The mass congregation will also mark its protest against the government's decision to keep the agitators away from the discussion table.

'Occupy Kasargod' will begin with performances and various forms of protests by Monday afternoon, and will continue till night fall, EPJM activists told 'Express'. The government decision to invite the newly-formed Endosulfan Cell, instead of activists who are in the forefront of the struggle, for the all-party meet has invited the ire of the protesters. The sidelining of the agitating-front and activists has been flayed widely by political leaders as well.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

25 March 2013

Endosulfan victims deserve aid: Aryadan

Kasaragod: Power minister Aryadan Mohammed has said victims of Endosulfan pesticide spraying deserve compensation. Speaking to reporters here, he said the UDF government had given Rs 1.50 lakh to the victims' families as compensation, compared to Rs 50,000 given by the previous LDF government.

The minister added that the UDF government would give all possible assistance to the victims, but would not do it for political gain. "The victims of endosulfan deserve compensation and there is no doubt in it," he said.

Earlier, about 25 DYFI activists took out a march to the guest house, shouting slogans against the government alleging that it was not providing any aid to the victims. They also demanded waiver of loans taken by the victims' families. The agitators were arrested and removed from the

THE HINDU

25 March 2013

26 March 2013

Crucial discussion today

C.S. Narayanankutty

KASARAGOD: Activists for the cause of endosulfan victims here pin their hopes on the second round of talks to be held in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday with Chief Minister Oommen Chandy on the rehabilitation of the victims.

The preliminary talks held on Thursday with Mr. Chandy were inconclusive.

"We feel that the preliminary talks could have been fruitful had the Chief Minister showed a little more patience to understand the issues, though he had promised to consider the contentious issues in the next round of talks," Ambalathara Kunhikrishnan, convener of the Endosulfan Peedhitha Janakeeya Munnai, a people's front for the cause of the victims, which has been leading a hunger strike here.

The Chief Minister sought more time to make a final decision, he said.

None of the agitating anti-endosulfan or environmental activists has been invited for the talks. P. Karunakaran, MP, local MLAs, the district panchayat president, and senior district-level officials will participate.

Officials of the endosulfan relief and remediation cell, formed after the United Democratic Front came to power in the State, have been invited for the meeting. But the cell, chaired by Agriculture Minister K.P. Mohanan, had not convened any meeting to review the relief measures for the victims, Mr. Karunakaran



REASSURANCE: P. Karunakaran, MP, visits on Saturday environmentalist A. Mohan Kumar, who is continuing his fast at the Kasaragod General Hospital seeking swift and comprehensive rehabilitation of endosulfan victims.

said. This would be raised at the meeting.

The preliminary meeting arrived at a near consensus to the accept the demand for extending the relief and rehabilitation package after the stipulated five years and holding of fresh medical camps to identify victims outside the 11 worst-affected panchayats where the pesticide had been aerially sprayed for years.

However, the demand for writing off loans taken by the victims' families to meet the expenses for prolonged medical treatment has not been met, Ambikasudan Mangad, activist, said.

Sea of humanity

The front has decided to form a "sea of humanity"

from 2.30 p.m. to 5 pm on Monday to pressure the government to end the agitation that entered the 35th day on Sunday. Nearly 3,000 people from various organisations and political parties will host programmes as the meeting will be in progress, Mr. Mangad said.

Gro Vasu and Moin Bappu, environmental activists, have been on an indefinite fast for four days. The health of A. Mohan Kumar continues to cause concern as the activist refuses to take food in hospital where he was shifted on March 20 after 16 days of fast. Sources said Mr. Kumar's vision had been fading from exhaustion.

Suresh Gopi, actor, has expressed his willingness to go on a fast if the talks failed.

Endosulfan forum withdraws stir

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: The Endosulfan Peedhitha Janakeeya Munnai has decided to withdraw temporarily the indefinite hunger strike spearheaded by it for the past 36 days after the second round of high-level talks held with Chief Minister Oommen Chandy.

A decision to this effect was made by forum convener Ambalathara Kunhikrishnan here on Monday night, hours after the talks held in Thiruvananthapuram concluded.

"We are quite satisfied with the promise given by the Chief Minister and expect that the authorities concerned will take due care to fulfil his words in a time-bound manner," he told presspersons here.

26 March 2013

THE HINDU • TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2013

REGION

Tribunal planned to settle claims of endosulfan victims

Fresh medical examination to identify victims and extend aid

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The government will appoint a committee to examine the question of setting up a tribunal to provide compensation to the victims of endosulfan. The committee will have the Law Secretary as convener and the Advocate General and Director of Prosecution as members.

The decision to this effect was taken at a conference convened by Chief Minister Oommen Chandy and attended by Ministers, people's representatives, political leaders, and officials here on Monday. The Chief Minister told the media after the conference that the committee would examine the liability of the pesticide companies and scope for setting up a tribunal.

Besides, a three-member committee would study the demand for waiver of bank loans taken by victims or their families. It will consist of Kasaragod District Collector, manager of the lead bank in Kasaragod, Joint Registrar of Cooperatives, Kasaragod, and Special Officer in charge of remediation of endosulfan victims.

Victim list

Mr. Chandy said the list of endosulfan victims eligible to receive assistance from the State would be expanded on the basis of fresh medical examination. The geographical boundaries of 11 panchayats of Kasaragod districts would not be a limitation for identifying fresh victims. Persons who have lived in the panchayats and shifted residence

More victims

He announced that 366 cancer patients and those identified as bed-ridden or mentally challenged or disabled, at the medical camps conducted between August and December last year, too would be included in the list of beneficiaries eligible for compensation recommended by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). With that, their total number would go up from 1,613 to 2,295.

He said the remaining 3,205 identified victims would continue to receive benefits announced by the State government. Besides, an expert team of doctors would examine them again to determine whether they fulfilled the criteria for compensation recommended by the



FOR A FAIR SETTLEMENT: Chief Minister Oommen Chandy and other leaders at a conference convened in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday to discuss problems faced by endosulfan victims. - PHOTO BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

NHRC. Even if they were not found eligible for the compensation, they would continue to receive the assistance announced by the State government. Altogether, 5,500 persons would be getting assistance.

The Chief Minister said an order that indicated that the victims would get assistance for five years only would be cancelled. It was not the intention of the government to limit assistance to five years. The order mentioned five

years because part of the compensation recommended by the NHRC was to be paid over five years. He said that compensation to the next of kin of dead victims (Rs.5 lakh each) had been paid to 600 persons. The payments to the

remaining 134 persons were getting delayed because of failure to submit succession certificates. Of the 1,602 living persons originally identified as eligible for compensation recommended by the NHRC, only 11 remained to be paid. The other victims were getting free rations, free treatment, and a monthly pension. Bystanders assisting bed-ridden or mentally retarded patients were also getting pensions. This would now be enhanced from Rs.400 to Rs.700 a month.

He recalled that 1,318 victims were newly identified last year. Fresh screening of those not in the list for NHRC compensation, including persons from outside the 11 panchayats, would be done by doctors K.P. Aravindan of Alappuzha Government Medical College, Jayaraman of Parangur Medical College, Jayakrishnan, and Thilashoodhan of Kozhikode Government Medical College,

and Mohammed Alsheel, district project officer of National Rural Health Mission, Kasaragod.

More hospitals

He said that 12 more hospitals would be added to the list of hospitals where victims can get free medical care. These would include the Kasurba Medical College at Mangalore and Manipal, Little Flower Eye Hospital, Annamalai, Government Ayurveda Medical College, Paranguram and Government Homoeo College, Kozhikode. He said the Social Welfare Department would provide Rs.1,500 a month as additional compensation to staff of seven BUDS schools caring for the mentally challenged in Kasaragod district. The schools were under panchayats, and the panchayats could pay them only Rs.3,500 a month. Ambulances would be provided to all 11 panchayats.

26 March 2013

Endosulfan Victims: Govt Offers Package

Express News Service

T'Puram: The State Government has come up with a comprehensive package to address several issues regarding the endosulfan victims in the district of Kasargod.

Chief Minister Oommen Chandy, said here on Monday after a high-level meeting that as part of the package families of endosulfan victims will be included in the BPL category.

They will be given free treatment, free ration and monthly pension. The pension will also be extended to cancer patients, apart from the bed-ridden and mentally challenged.

The new package will take into account the Human Rights Commission recommendation of Rs 5 lakh to the families of the deceased. As per its recommendation, out of the 734 eligible families, the government has given compensation to 600.

Remaining would be settled after verification of records for proving their eligibility. Chandy, said that cancer patients will also be included in the new package.

STRIKE WITHDRAWN

The Endosulfan Peeditha Janakiya Munnani (EPJM) on Monday decided to withdraw the indefinite hunger strike in the light of the all-party meeting held in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday

Two medical camps conducted in Kasargod after the UDF Government came to power identified 1,318 beneficiaries, taking the tally of total beneficiaries to 5,500.

Out of this 2,295 will receive benefits as recommended by the state as well as the Human Rights Commission.

The remaining persons will undergo medical examination by experts and their categories determined accordingly.

For the purpose, five expert doctors will be appointed, who will submit their reports within four months.

The Chief Minister said that the apprehension that the current financial assistance to endosulfan victims will come to an end after five years, is totally baseless.

Twelve hospitals including

private ones, are currently providing treatment to the endosulfan victims, the expenses of which are being met by the government.

Four more hospitals will be added to this list and they are Kasturbha Medical College in Mangalore and Manipal, Little Flower Eye Hospital Angamaly, Government Ayurveda Medical College Pariyaram and Government Homoeo Medical College Kozhikode.

Since aerial spraying of the pesticide was practised, the 11 panchayats currently considered on geographical basis will be reconsidered and the package would also include persons with health conditions affected by endosulfan in other areas of the district, after appropriate medical examination.

As per the recommendation of the Social Welfare Department, the pension to by-standers of Endosulfan victims will be increased from Rs 400 to Rs 700.

Seven Budd schools are currently taking care of mentally challenged children.

The staff of these schools; currently five per school are

being paid Rs 3,500 each as monthly salary and this will be increased to Rs 5,000. The Social Welfare Department will provide ambulance in the 11 panchayats.

A committee comprising Kasaragod District Collector, Joint Registrar, Cooperative Department, Kasaragod, Special Officer, endosulfan and Lead Bank Manager will decide on writing off of the debts pertaining to the victims.

The committee will submit its report to the government in three months. A six-month moratorium has been declared on the debts.

A committee will also be formed for establishing a tribunal for legal proceedings against the manufacturer of endosulfan.

The Home Secretary will be the convener of this committee with Advocate General and Director General of Prosecution as its members.

The meeting chaired by Chief Minister Oommen Chandy was also attended by Ministers Aryadan Mohammed, M K Muneer, K P Mohanan and political leaders from Kasaragod district.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

26 March 2013

CM clears air on endosulfan damages

Victims To Get Aid Beyond Five Years

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Thiruvananthapuram: Endosulfan victims in Kasaragod district will be entitled for government aid beyond five years.

Announcing this here on Monday, chief minister Oommen Chandy said cancer patients in that district, too, would be eligible for the government's help announced for



Members of Janakeeya Koottayma during a march in solidarity with endosulfan victims, in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday

endosulfan victims.

Talking to reporters after a high-level meeting on the disbursement of compensation and other aids to endosulfan vic-

tims, Chandy said a committee would be set up to explore the possibilities of establishing a special tribunal to address the needs of those who

fell victim to the deadly insecticide. "Earlier too we didn't have any intention to limit government aid to endosulfan victims to five years. But, since there is a confusion, I clarify that the victims will continue to get the aid beyond five years too," he said.

The chief minister also announced a six-month moratorium on the payback of loans endosulfan victims had availed of from co-operative banks. A five-member medical team has been set up for examining those affected by the endosulfan use. The committee would examine them and recommend the government the category under which these

persons should be included.

The committee has been asked to submit its report in four months. This exercise has been initiated to ensure all victims get government aid, Chandy said. As many as 734 people were eligible for Rs 5 lakh compensation recommended by the NHRC. Of this, the state has disbursed assistance to 600 families.

"The financial assistance could not be given to 134 families due to lack of clarity in the entitlement documents they had produced. The fund is available, and it would be disbursed as soon as the government receives proper documents," he said.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

08 April 2013

An Infant Death Brings To Fore The Long-Term Dangers Of Endosulfan & Kerala's Failure In Convincing The Centre Of The Situation's Gravity

OUR ACT OF OMISSION

Vibe B | The

8/4/13

A DEADLY COCKTAIL

The death of seven-month-old Mohammed Sina highlights the complexities and flaws of the state's rehabilitation programme for endosulfan victims. Sina was not among these 5,500 victims screened for endosulfan poisoning and related diseases in the past three years. The last medical camp for screening of endosulfan-related ailments was conducted in August last year, well before he was born. And so far, 27,006 from 11 worst affected panchayats in Kasargod were screened for endosulfan poisoning.

Health officials say Sina's parents might have been perfectly healthy but must have passed on the toxicity of the pesticide to the newborn. They warn that the district could face more such mortalities and there is a greater probability of birth of such disabled children as the pesticide residue has entered food chains and water bodies. The state will need a huge amount as rehabilitation package in the coming years but it is yet to convince the Centre of the gravity of the situation.

The state had sought Rs 456 crore from the Union agriculture ministry whereas the latter stated in a recent affidavit in the Supreme Court that all the available raw material stock for endosulfan should be allowed to be processed so that the losses incurred by pesticide manufacturers could be minimised. And this, despite the apex court banning the production and sale of endosulfan in the country two years ago. "We were shocked at this response. Even the Indian Council of Medical Research had in its response pointed out the adverse effects of endosulfan," a state official said.

Senior officials felt the state should have requested aid from the Union ministries of health or environment and forests. "Union minister for environment and forests Jayant Narayan had in fact repeatedly said that the pesticide should be banned as it has adverse effects on the environment," one of them said.

Activists claimed that the issue had been politicised. "There are many cases wherein deserving victims have to struggle to get adequate compensation. The government should pass an order making it mandatory for panchayats to register every endosulfan-related birth and death and send the details to the health department for compensation," said C Jayakumar, founder director of Thalass, an environmental NGO that took up the issue two decades ago.

The government should have a comprehensive rehabilitation programme for victims and it should include the pediatric care of the terminally ill, vocational courses, counselling centres and schools for special children. "It is a good thing that the government intends to transform the district into an organic district but it is easier said than done. The toxic residue levels in the water bodies will have to be tested first as endosulfan has already entered the food chain," he said.

Activists said the plantation corporation, which did the aerial spray of endosulfan over cashew crop from 1978 to 2001, should be made to pay a heavy compensation. "They have already paid Rs 27 crore but this is nothing compared to the long term health and environmental problems. We have lost 724 lives so far," an official said.

ENDOCRINE DISORDERS

Hormone deficiencies, thyroid disorders, metabolic bone disease, sex hormone disorders

SYMPTOMS

Acute poisoning like hyperactivity, tremors, convulsions, lack of coordination, staggering, breathing difficulty, nausea and vomiting, diarrhoea

CANCER

Cases have increased in Kasargod. Studies have pointed out that there is 2.8% increase in the no. of cases

NEUROLOGICAL PROBLEMS

Several cases of mental disorders reported in Kasargod

Endosulfan is a chlorinated hydrocarbon insecticide that's soluble in water. Toxicity is partly dependent on the manner with which the pesticide is administered.

Undiluted endosulfan is slowly absorbed into the body whereas absorption is more rapid in the presence of alcohol, oils and emulsifiers.

WHAT STATE GOVT SAYS

27,000 TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE SCREENED
11 PANCHAYATS AFFECTED
724 NUMBER OF VICTIMS DEAD
5,500 ENDOSULFAN VICTIMS

'PEOPLE STILL THINK THIS IS JUST A REGIONAL PROBLEM'

A Mohankumar

I was making arrangements for the treatment of Mohammed Sina when the news of his death reached me. He is the fifth person to die after our latest agitation started on March 3 and yet another reminder how deadly this pesticide is. I don't know how many more deaths would force the government to take a decisive stand on the issue.

What is even more shocking is that people of the state still look at the issue as a problem affecting Kasargod alone, while it is a national problem. The use of dreaded pesticide cocktails like endosulfan



Graphic: KERIC-4

is rampant across the country and a handful of it may take our lives as we consume vegetables and fruits we buy from other states.

The endosulfan tragedy is an offshoot of the flawed policies and agrarian practices we adopted as part of the Green Revolution. The government and agricultural research establishments blindly followed the prescriptions of global pesticide and fertilizer majors to implement the programme. Endosulfan

was sprayed aerially for 22 years by Plantation Corporation of Kerala (PCK) at their cashew plantations and the poison polluted water resources. The aerial spraying was done without any safeguards and mandatory permissions.

Even after more than a decade of agitation, the human suffering we have seen and documented is just a fraction of the real situation. Kasargod speaks seven languages and many areas are geographically inaccessible. It would take an entire day for the people from remote places to reach the district headquarters. Many people still don't know the actual rea-

Seven-month-old endosulfan victim dies

Seven-month-old Mohammed Sina, an endosulfan victim from Kasargod who was suffering from hydrocephalus (abnormal accumulation of cerebrospinal fluid in brain), died on Sunday. The body was buried at the Panchayathi Mahabom in the evening. He was not eligible for the relief announced by the government because his name did not figure in the list of endosulfan victims as he was born after it was prepared.

Dr. Mohammed Ashraf, assistant nodal officer, endosulfan rehab project, said the list was prepared on the basis of medical camp conducted in 2010 and 2011.

The son of Salahuddin and Fatima underwent a ventricular peritoneal shunt surgery to drain the extra fluid in the when he was hardly a month old.

Kerala must dispose stored stock of endosulfan in various godowns as there is every possibility that they will seep into the soil and contaminate groundwater resources. The govt should ask the Centre for a huge rehab package and penalize the people who destroyed the livelihood and health of thousands of families here.

—Lekshmanan, RETIRED NAB DEPT OFFICIAL AND ACTIVIST

There are many cases where deserving victims have struggled to get adequate compensation.

The govt should pass an order where panchayats will make it mandatory to suo motu register every birth and death related to endosulfan poisoning. Their medical details can be forwarded to the health dept for adequate compensation.

—C Jayakumar, DIRECTOR OF THALASS, AN NGO

In Kerala, the first litigation against endosulfan was in 2000 when Lekshmanan approached a lower court in Mangalore.

In 2002, the apex court temporarily stayed the aerial spraying of endosulfan at PCK's cashew plantations.

In 2003, HC upheld the order of the lower court and it permanently stopped the spraying method. After that, the state govt imposed a ban on the use of endosulfan.

The Supreme Court completely banned the manufacture, sale and use of endosulfan following a PIL filed by NTP in 2011 till the

expert panel appointed to study the pesticide effects submitted its report.

In 2012, the joint expert committee submitted a report suggesting that the raw material be phased out by allowing manufacturers, sale and use of the pesticide. The bench reserved its judgement on the suggestions of the committee.

In its report to the apex court, the panel had said that almost all pesticides used in India had adverse health and biological effects and endosulfan could not be singled out as a unique pesticide.

The author is a noted environmental activist

HIL in a bind over disposal of pesticide raw material

T Raveendran | 104

Officials of Hindustan Insecticides Limited (HIL) unit are caught in a catch 22 situation not knowing what to do with the nearly 300 tonnes of raw material for manufacturing endosulfan. With the Supreme Court banning the production of endosulfan they are not able to utilize the chemical that can be used for endosulfan production. On the other hand, they are not able to destroy this because they are not aware of the protocol for detoxifying this chemical that has been imported from China. They have been storing this hazardous chemical in their factory for nearly two years, after the apex court banned endosulfan.

"This is a fire retardant substance that is described as a chemical weapons. Only China and US are known to produce the pesticide. It can leak if stored for long periods of time, and nobody tells us what to do with this," a company official said.

But environmentalists refuse to buy this argument. "The view that there are no methods available to either destroy or decontaminate or isolate a chemical is not acceptable. There must be some methods available for these processes, though I can't tell you the exact method at this stage. The industry is only trying to create pressure to continue pesticide production," said Chandra Shekhar, deputy director of Centre for Science and Environment.

HIL, Kochi had produced 1,800 tonnes of endosulfan exceeding its annual capacity of 1,600 tonnes in 2010. Subsequently the unit then exported the endosulfan stock it had after getting clearance from the apex court.

Hindustan Insecticides Ltd unit in Kochi

THE STORY SO FAR

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The Supreme Court completely banned the manufacture, sale and use of endosulfan following a PIL filed by NTP in 2011 till the

expert panel appointed to study the pesticide effects submitted its report.

In 2012, the joint expert committee submitted a report suggesting that the raw material be phased out by allowing manufacturers, sale and use of the pesticide. The bench reserved its judgement on the suggestions of the committee.

In its report to the apex court, the panel had said that almost all pesticides used in India had adverse health and biological effects and endosulfan could not be singled out as a unique pesticide.

The author is a noted environmental activist

The Indian EXPRESS

10 April 2013

Cell for Endosulfan Victims Functioning Well: Govt

Express News Service

Kochi: The state government on Tuesday submitted before the Kerala High Court that the Endosulfan Victims' Relief and Remediation Cell has been functioning effectively in Kasargod district in connection with the rehabilitation and welfare measures being undertaken for endosulfan victims.

The state filed the affidavit following a direction by the High Court to the government, to inform about the number of meetings held by

the district-level cell after its formation. The court had passed the order on a petition seeking a directive to the government to take follow-up action on the welfare and rehabilitation measures of the endosulfan victims. The petitioner, B C Kumaran of Kasargod, said that the government order forming the district-level cell was issued on October 15, 2011. However, there had not been any follow-up action since then. The petitioner also alleged that the Centre had not provided any funds for provid-

The state submitted that the Cell was formed in the backdrop of the Endosulfan tragedy, with a view to take remedial measures

ing compensation to the victims.

The state submitted that the Cell was formed in the backdrop of the Endosulfan tragedy, with a view to take

remedial measures. The cell has been conducting monthly meetings ever since its inception and has five separate committees for Health, Education, Social Welfare, Agriculture and Civil Supplies. Specialised medical camps have also been organised under it.

Meanwhile, the National Human Rights Commission had given direction to pay compensation to the completely bed-ridden, mentally retarded and other disabled patients. Hence, the patients in all the lists had to be re-

categorised and the lists have been submitted by the DMO.

According to the government, it was ready to award the compensation as suggested by the NHRC. The commission had recommended a compensation of ₹5 lakh each to the dependants of those who had died as well as to those who have been bedridden due to exposure to endosulfan. The commission had also recommended a compensation of ₹3 lakh each to those who sustained severe injuries.

THE HINDU

13 April 2013

Approach district panel for relief, endosulfan victim's family told

Court seeks details of work undertaken by panel

Special Correspondent

KOCHI: A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court on Friday asked the parents of a boy who died allegedly owing to endosulfan-induced health problems to approach the Kasaragod district-level relief and rehabilitation committee for getting compensation.

The government came under attack for its failure to sanction compensation to the parents of seven-month-old Muhammed Sinan who died last week. Muhammed, son of Salauddin and Fathima of Ambalathara in Pullur-Periyar panchayat, died of a mysterious disease.

The Bench comprising Chief Justice Manjula Chellur and Justice K. Vinod

Chandran issued the directive when a petition filed by B.C. Kumaran of Kasaragod seeking a directive to the government to take follow-up action on the welfare and rehabilitation of the endosulfan victims came up for hearing.

The Bench asked the parents of Muhammed to approach the district-level committee with necessary application for financial assistance from the government.

The court directed the committee which is looking after the rehabilitation program to fill details of the works undertaken by it. It should include the number of claims and the amount of

compensation made, as also the number of applications pending for consideration.

The petitioner pointed out that Muhammed did not figure on the official list of the endosulfan victims.

In his petition, B.C. Kumaran of Kasaragod said the government order forming the district-level cell was issued on October 15, 2011. However, there had not been any follow-up action since then. The cell, headed by the Agriculture Minister, had not met even once, and no welfare measure had been implemented.

He also alleged that the Centre had failed to provide any funds for giving compensation to the victims.

The Indian EXPRESS

13 March 2013

High Court Order on Solatium to Endosulfan Victim

Express News Service

Kochi: The Kerala High Court on Friday intervened in the issue of failure of the government to sanction compensation to the parents of seven-month-old Muhammed Sinan, the endosulfan victim, who died last week.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Manjula Chellur and Justice K Vinod Chandran issued the directive while considering a petition filed by B C Kumaran of Kasaragod seeking a directive to the government to take follow-up actions on the welfare and rehabilitation measures of the endosulfan victims.

The Bench directed the parents of Sinan to approach the district-level committee (DLC) with the necessary application for seeking financial assistance from the government. The court also directed the DLC which is in charge of the entire rehabilitation program to file details of work they have done so far.

The petitioner pointed out that Sinan did not figure in the official list of endosulfan victims. Sinan was included in the official list of the victims as the last exhaustive medical camp to identify people suffering from diseases attributed to the pesticide spraying was held in December 2011, the petitioner said.

In his petition, B C Kumaran said that the government order forming the district-level cell was issued on October 15, 2011. However, there had not been any follow-up action since then.

The cell was headed by the Agriculture Minister and the Kasaragod District Collector was its convener. In fact, the Collector had sought certain clarifications from the members included in the cell. The cell, therefore, had not met even once and no

ing for consideration.

Sinan, son of Salauddin and Fathima of Ambalathara in Pullur-Periyar panchayat, one of the 11 panchayats in the district where endosulfan was sprayed in the cashew plantations which has a sizeable number of people with mysterious diseases.

The petitioner pointed out that Sinan did not figure in the official list of endosulfan victims. Sinan was included in the official list of the victims as the last exhaustive medical camp to identify people suffering from diseases attributed to the pesticide spraying was held in December 2011, the petitioner said.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

24 April 2013

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TIMES STATE

Endosulfan panel to begin work next week

Sreedevi Chitharanjan | TNN

Kozhikode: The expert panel constituted by chief minister Oommen Chandy to prepare a report on new scientific norms for the inclusion of remaining Endosulfan affected persons to avail government compensation will begin their work next week. The five-member medical team will have its first meeting at Kozhikode Medical College Hospital on April 28 to prepare draft terms of reference and chalk out strategies to prepare the



The report of the expert committee is expected to help the government to ensure the inclusion of all deserving people in the list entitled to get compensation.

norms to determine the classification of remaining victims.

The CM had appointed a five-member medical team to

submit a report to the state government within four months to expand the compensation list of the Endosulfan victims.

The report of the expert committee is expected to help the government to ensure the inclusion of all deserving people in the list entitled to get government compensation. At present, only 2,295 victims are included in the beneficiary list, based on the recommendations made by National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and state government.

The compensation is being provided to bed-ridden, mentally and physically challenged victims and can-

cer patients in the 11 affected grama panchayats. Of the 5,500 victims, only 2,295 people had found a place in the compensation list of the state government. The expert team will classify the remaining 3,205 persons suffering from various ailments.

Dr KP Aravindan, a member of the committee, said that a detailed plan on various approaches being adopted to fix the eligibility criteria to determine the compensation would be made on the first meeting.

The convenor of the com-

mittee, Dr Muhammed Ash-eel, said that the classification of the remaining 3,205 persons will be made on the basis of gravity of their diseases.

"Though they do not come under the guidelines set by the NHRC, they have been suffering from various ailments related to respiratory system, liver, kidney, skin and brain and other ailments affecting the entire body," he said.

"We will submit the report to the government by end of June," he added.

THE HINDU

03 May 2013

Alternatives to endosulfan get the nod

Stockholm convention approves non-chemical as well as chemical alternatives

Roy Mathew

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Conference of Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, meeting in Geneva, approved non-chemical as well as chemical alternatives to endosulfan on Thursday.

The non-chemical alternatives were proposed in a significant departure from past practice. The evaluation of non-chemical alternatives, as accepted by the conference, consists of an ecosystem-based approach to pest management as well as technical interventions.

C. Jayakumar of the non-governmental organisation Thanal, who is in Geneva as an observer, said in an e-mail message that now that non-chemical alternatives to endosulfan are accepted officially by the UN Convention, "there is lot of scope for India



The venue of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants in Geneva.

and others to explore and be world leaders in providing the solutions to farming without poisons."

The conference approved as many as 100 chemical alternatives to endosulfan subject to certain reservations. The approved chemical alternatives include pesticides

malathion, aldicarb, carbofuran, cabaryl, fipronil, methyl parathion, and pyrethrin, which are used in India.

The approval essentially takes note of the report on the assessment of chemical and non-chemical alternatives to endosulfan carried out by the Persistent Organic Pollutants

Review Committee of the convention and encourages parties to consider the outcome of the assessment when choosing alternatives to endosulfan for the use of crop-pest complexes available as specific exemptions.

The decision emphasised the need for further assessment under local conditions prevailing in the context of specific agro-ecosystems and agricultural practices and giving priority to ecosystem-based approaches to pest control. The conference requested its secretariat to undertake activities to support parties in evaluating the information on alternatives to the use of endosulfan in their countries, including the information made available through the work programme on endosulfan.

See also Page 9

04 May 2013

Chandy calls on endosulfan victims

Reviews progress of their treatment

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: Chief Minister Oommen Chandy on Thursday visited endosulfan victims admitted to the Yenapoya medical college hospital in Mangalore and reviewed the progress of the treatment being administered in the hospital.

Mr. Chandy, who was in Mangalore as part of electioneering for the Congress ahead of the May 5 Assembly polls in Karnataka, visited the hospital in the evening, official sources here said on Friday.

Mr. Chandy visited four endosulfan victims, including a two-week-old boy from Karamukha panchayat in the district who has been found unable to cry since he was born last month. The boy was referred as a special case by

the district administration to the hospital, with which the State government has entered into a formal understanding to provide expert treatment to the endosulfan-affected victims.

Mr. Chandy also interacted with the relatives of the patients at the hospital. He later reviewed the progress of the medical care being offered to the endosulfan victims.

He interacted with senior officials of the medical college, including Vice-Chancellor P. Chandramohan, medical superintendent M.S. Musaba, registrar K. Janardhanan, and controller of examinations K.P. Jayarajan.

OBITUARY

06 May 2013

More medical camps to identify endosulfan victims

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: Providing a ray of hope to distraught family members of suspected endosulfan victims, the district administration has decided to conduct more medical camps in June and July to identify fresh cases in the district.

Those who wish to attend the medical camps should register their names at their nearby primary or community health centre by May 25, an official release, quoting the Deputy Collector, who is in-charge of the Endosulfan Cell, said.

Families which had been living in panchayats where endosulfan was aerially sprayed in the cashew estates of the state-owned Plantation Corporation of Kerala (PCK) Ltd. from 1978 to

2001 can register their names for the medical camps even if the family members live in areas outside the notified 11 panchayat limits, it said.

However, those who did not reside in the notified panchayat limits during the period of the pesticide spraying are not entitled to register their names for the medical camps.

Decision flayed

This decision of the administration has come in for strong criticism from the Endosulfan Peeditha Janakeeya Munnani (EPJM), which has spearheaded a series of agitations to press its demands. The decision to hold another round of medical camps is a welcome step, but, limiting the camps only to those living in the notified 11

panchayat limits during the pesticide spraying period is a virtual retraction of the promise made by Chief Minister Oommen Chandy that people living in other areas will also be screened to identify fresh victims, Endosulfan Peeditha Janakeeya Munnani convenor Ambalathara Kunhikrishnan told The Hindu on Sunday. This promise was made on other occasions as well by various people in authority, he said.

Welcome move

He said the government's recent decision to include 1,318 more victims and a few more suspected cases on the official list was a welcome step. But the list included people living in 27 panchayats and three municipalities, and the

proposed medical camps should cater to all living outside the notified panchayats, he said.

For instance, localities falling under Kodom-Belur, Pallikare, Chengala, and Cheruvathur villages situated close to the notified panchayat limits had a significant presence of suspected endosulfan victims. Such people should be allowed to attend the camps, Mr. Kunhikrishnan said.

Let the families present their case and the physicians carry out preliminary examinations to decide if they could be categorised as endosulfan victims, he said.

The authorities should not limit the National Human Rights Commission-recommended compensation only to those living in the notified panchayat limits, he said.

THE HINDU

03 May 2013

Endosulfan residue persists in Kasaragod soil

Residue decreasing in water samples, finds fourth phase of CWRDM study

Jabir Mushthari

KOZHIKODE: Though its concentration is slowly decreasing, residues of endosulfan, the controversial chemical pesticide, are still present in the soil samples collected from different panchayats of Kasaragod district, says a scientific study.

The fourth and latest phase of a continuing study undertaken by a team of scientists led by P.S. Hari Kumar, principal investigator and head of the water quality division of the Centre for Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM), Kozhikode, pointed to a greater persistence of endosulfan in soil and sediment samples

than in water samples.

Interestingly the latest study, the report of which was submitted to the Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (KSCSTE), was conducted in the surrounding panchayats of the Plantation Corporation of Kerala's estates about 11 years after the company put an end to the aerial spraying of the pesticide in its plantations.

According to Dr. Hari Kumar, the residues found in the samples need not be necessarily of the pesticide aerially sprayed in the region over 10 years ago.

"It can also be of some recent use by other means since a complete ban on the pesti-

cide came only a couple of years ago in the State," he said.

Study since 2010

The CWRDM has been conducting a study on the persistence of endosulfan in water, soil, and sediment samples of Kasaragod in different phases since 2010. The latest is the fourth phase of that study. Though the residues of the pesticide were found to be waning more quickly from the water samples, it didn't happen so with the sediment and soil samples. "Its decrease was found particularly slow with the soil samples," said Dr. Hari Kumar.

According to him, the degradation rates of both endosulfan isomers were greatly affected by environmental conditions.

The study also found that com-

• Endosulfan is fairly immobile in soil: scientists

• Study report submitted to KSCSTE

ed in three samples. Sampling was again continued in the fourth phase to find out the persistence of endosulfan. Out of the three soil samples in which endosulfan was detected during the third phase, it was found to be persistent in two soil samples from Panathadi and Muliur panchayats during the fourth phase.

Need to enforce ban

A relatively high concentration of endosulfan was detected in the soil, according to scientists, because of the fact that it is fairly immobile in soil and is highly persistent. "We need to keep tabs on the time the pesticide takes for natural degradation in the soil. In the meanwhile, we have to also check whether the ban on endosulfan is being strictly followed by all," said Dr. Hari Kumar.

THE HINDU

24 May 2013

Endosulfan: court seeks details of compensation

Special Correspondent

KOCHI: A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court on Thursday directed the State government to furnish the details of the dependents of endosulfan victims who had been granted compensation as directed by the National Human Rights Commission.

The Bench comprising Chief Justice Manjula Chellur and Justice K. Vinod Chandran directed the government to inform the court whether those who had received the compensation were the genuine dependents of those who died due to endosulfan exposure or those who had been bedridden. The government should also provide the full details of the persons who received the compensation.

The Indian EXPRESS

24 May 2013

Endosulfan: State Told to File Affidavit

Express News Service

Kochi: Coming down heavily on the state government, the Kerala High Court on Thursday directed the state to file an affidavit on whether the compensation of ₹21 crore to endosulfan victims had reached the right hands. A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Manjula Chellur and Justice K Vinod Chandran passed the order while considering a petition filed by B C Kumaran of Kasaragod seeking a directive to the government to take follow-up action on the welfare and rehabilitation of endosulfan victims.

The court had directed the district-level committee, in-charge of the rehabilitation programme, to file details of the work they have done so far, including the number of claims made before the committee, amount of compensation given and the number of pending applications. But it was not complied with properly and the court expressed its dissatisfaction for the inaction of the state.

THE HINDU

12 June 2013

23 July 2013

Panel formed to study formation of endosulfan tribunal

Compensation to victims

Special Correspondent

KOCHI: The State government informed the Kerala High Court on Tuesday that a committee had been formed to examine if an endosulfan tribunal was required to look into the grant of compensation to the victims and if the pesticide manufacturers could be made to pay.

In an affidavit submitted before a Bench comprising Chief Justice Manjula Chellur and Justice K. Vinod Chandran, the government said another committee had been constituted to study whether the debts of the victims should be written off or not.

The affidavit was filed in response to a court directive to furnish the details of the dependents of victims who had been granted the compensation ordered by the National Human Rights Commission.

The affidavit said the victims had been provided a comprehensive package of services and benefits. Besides a district-level cell for their rehabilitation, a special cell for coordinating the functions of government offices

- Another panel to study debts of the victims
- Victims given a comprehensive package of services

and agencies had been constituted.

The affidavit said the government had taken many steps to address the problems faced by the victims, and every attempt was being made to see that the benefits reached them. The government had complied with the recommendations of commission for providing compensation and paid Rs. 25.95 crore to 2,046 people as the first instalment.

Of the compensation of Rs. 5 lakh for bedridden patients, Rs. 3 lakh would be disbursed in two instalments of Rs. 1.5 lakh each and the balance Rs. 2 lakh deposited in their bank accounts. Out of the Rs. 3 lakh for the disabled, Rs. 2 lakh would be disbursed in two instalments of Rs. 1 lakh each and the balance Rs. 1 lakh deposited in their names in banks.

'Disband endosulfan panel'

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: The Endosulfan Peedhitha Janakeeya Munani, an organisation fighting for the cause of endosulfan victims, has demanded the disbanding of the panel chaired by C.N. Ramachandran Nair, former judge, studying the need to set up a tribunal to help streamline the government's initiatives

to provide relief to the victims.

The committee has failed to assess the ground realities in the villages affected by the aerial spraying of the pesticide, Ambalathara Kunhikrishnan said at a press conference here on Monday. He said the committee had been adopting a lax and casual approach and coming out with prejudiced statements.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

07 August 2013

THE TIMES OF INDIA, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM | KOLLAM
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 2013

TIMES

Panel moots tribunal, relief fund for endosulfan victims

Govt Must Form A Team Of Docs To Advise Tribunal: Report

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Thiruvananthapuram: The state-appointed three-member expert committee on endosulfan issue has recommended constitution of a single-member tribunal and relief fund for endosulfan victims in Kasargod.

The expert committee was constituted by the government to recommend the source of funds for endosulfan victims and the constitution of a tribunal to rehabilitate the victims.

"Going by the nature of disputes arising in the course of implementation of the packages, benefits and incentives granted by the government based on recommendations of National Human Rights Commission, people's representatives, NGOs and victims, we recommend a comprehensive legislation providing - among other

The state-appointed three-member expert committee on endosulfan issue has recommended a compensation of **₹5 lakh** to the family of deceased victims, paralytic patients and victims who have become mentally challenged. The report has also recommended **₹3 lakh** for cancer patients and a monthly payment of **₹2,000** to the legal heirs of deceased persons.



things - the constitution of a single-member tribunal with a serving judicial officer of the rank of a district judge as presiding officer," the report said.

The committee has recommended that a separate fund needs to be allocated for rehabilitating endosulfan victims. The contributions can be collected from central government, state government, banks, NGOs and sympathizers of endosulfan victims from across the country.

"The plantation corporation has already contributed

₹10 crore for this purpose. So we advise the state not to take up proceedings against plantation corporation," the report observed.

The report said that the government should also constitute a team of doctors to advise the tribunal on medical issues that will come up before the tribunal.

The team should be stationed in Kasargod. The tribunal should collect evidence personally from the victims and should be given freedom to conduct a fair enquiry. As far as possible all applications

should be disposed within three months after a plea is filed.

The committee said that most of the cases would be over within years and the tribunal should be abolished after that, and about the few remaining cases the state can notify them with the approval of high court to a district or additional judge.

Endosulfan, an insecticide, was used extensively worldwide on food crops like tea, fruits, vegetables and grains. For 25 years till the insecticide was banned it was indiscriminately aerial-sprayed over cashew plantations that contaminated soil, water sources, wildlife and adversely affected the health of people. Already banned in over 80 countries, 127 countries agreed on a worldwide ban at the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP) in April 2011.

The Indian EXPRESS

07 August 2013

Endosulfan Victims: Panel Moots Payment, Tribunal

Express News Service

T'Puram: The three-member committee constituted by the State Government to recommend on 'The constitution of Tribunal and Sources of fund for Endosulfan victims of Kasargod district' chaired by Justice C N Ramachandran Nair, has mooted a monthly payment of **₹2,000** to the legal heirs of the deceased victims of the killer pesticide.

Along with this amount, the legal heirs will be paid the interest on the balance compensation amount to be deposited in the government treasury payable after death till the end of the year in which the deceased would attain 65 years of age had he/she been alive. The deposit amount will be released to the legal heirs, as and when the monthly payment is discontinued.

The victims who are permanently disabled and or having 50 per cent or more mental retardation should

VICTIM DEBUNKS GOVT'S TALL CLAIMS

Kochi: A petitioner in the endosulfan case has submitted before the HC that the state government had paid compensation to just 1,613 persons, even though 4,200-affected persons had been listed by the government. B C Kumaran had filed the plea seeking a directive to the government to take follow-up action for the rehabilitation and welfare of endosulfan victims. The petitioner, in a reply affidavit to the state government, submitted that the total number of persons eligible to get the compensation would be 5,500. The tall claim of the state that a compensation of **₹27.0425 crore** had been paid towards the first instalment is a pretension.

ENS

also be given a monthly payment of **₹2,000**. A monthly sum of **₹1,000** should be paid to those partially disabled and those with below 50 per cent mental retardation and for cancer patients.

Coming to bulk compensation to be paid, the committee has recommended to pay **₹5 lakh** each deducting the payment already made to the kin of the deceased victims, and for those permanently bedridden and disabled and for those having mental retardation of 50

per cent or above. It is also recommended to give **₹3 lakh** for partially disabled including cancer patients and those with less than 50 per cent mental retardation.

The committee recommended constitution of a single-member tribunal with a serving judicial officer in the rank of a district judge to settle all disputes arising with regard to eligibility for compensation and other benefits provided to victims in summary proceedings.

DECCAN
HERALD

07 August 2013

STATE'S CLAIMS ON ENDOSULFAN RELIEF RUBBISHED

Kochi, Aug. 6: The petitioner in the endosulfan case has rubbished the state's claims regarding the implementation of the endosulfan rehabilitation package. The petitioner argued that the state has made a claim of paying compensation to 4,200 people but so far only 1,613 were the beneficiaries.

B.C. Kumaran, who filed the plea seeking a directive to the government to take follow-up action for rehabilitation and welfare of the endosulfan victims, filed an affidavit in this regard before Kerala high court.

The petitioner, in a reply affidavit to the state government, submitted that the total number of persons eligible to get compensation would be 5,500. The tall claim of the state that a compensation of ₹27.04 crore was paid towards the first instalment is a pretension. It is a deceptive claim that tends to mislead the court. The total amount of compensation to be paid would be about ₹227 crore and 24 lakh but what has been paid is only ₹27 crore. The number of deaths due to the endosulfan menace is 594 but the actual number will be 807 as per the information collected under the RTI, the

THE HINDU

07 August 2013

Panel recommends formation of tribunal

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The committee constituted by the government to recommend on the constitution of tribunal and sources of funds for endosulfan victims of Kasaragod district has recommended the constitution of a tribunal, with limited powers, for identification of victims and adjudication of compensation claims. The tribunal will not be competent to entertain any compensation claims against Plantation Corporation of Kerala Ltd. (PCK), which sprayed endosulfan aerially in its plantations, or pesticide companies. Its role would be limited to settling disputes over eligibility for compensation or other assistance ordered by the government.

Recommendation

The committee, comprising retired Judge C.N. Ramachandran Nair, Director-General of Prosecutions T. Asaf Ali, and Law Secretary C.P. Rama Raja Prema Prasad, proposed in its report submitted to Chief Minister Oommen Chandy on Tuesday that a serving judicial officer of the rank of district judge should be appointed as tribunal to settle disputes through summary proceedings.

It also recommended the constitution of an 'Endosul-

- Tribunal to adjudicate on endosulfan relief claims
- Panel envisages only limited powers for tribunal

fan Relief fund' with State funds and through contributions and collections from the Central government, the Plantation Corporation, and others to fund assistance to endosulfan victims.

A team of specialist doctors from medical colleges should be constituted to certify eligibility and categorisation of claimants for grant of relief by the tribunal.

Agency

An agency should be established at the district level to implement the orders of the tribunal. The tribunal and the agency should be established through State legislation.

The committee suggested that the government should not go for litigation against the PCK and should take over the liability to compensate the victims through constitution of the relief fund. It also recommended that eligibility for assistance should be normally limited to people living within a maximum of one km from the plantations of PCK.

24 August 2013

6,012 sign up for endosulfan camps

Specialists Take
Part In Initiative To
Find Fresh Victims

G Rajiv / IANS



The health department plans to complete the camps by Sunday and prepare a detailed report of those diagnosed as victims.

Thiruvananthapuram: As many as 6,012 people have registered themselves for the specialist medical camps being organised by the health department in the endosulfan-hit areas of Kasaragod to find fresh victims of the pesticide.

"These people are now attending the camps, in which we are carrying out various diagnostic tests. Specialist doctors from various medical college hospitals are participating in camps being organised at five places," said Dr Mohammed Asheel, nodal officer.

These camps are being organised to find endosulfan victims who have not been included in the government list so far. The doctors attending the camps were earlier given an orientation talk, wherein the most common diseases found among endosulfan victims were discussed. Based on these findings, the doctors will check if any such symptom prevails among those registered.

"Most of those who registered themselves for the screening camps had some symptoms; it could be because of their fear too. A detailed evaluation will be required before coming to a conclusion. On Friday alone, 1,458 people came to the camps," Dr Asheel said.

The department plans to complete the camps by Sunday and prepare a detailed report of those diagnosed as victims. A verification process will be the second stage, in which a detailed analysis of places where the patients are staying will be done to find if they had any exposure to endosulfan. The patients will be finally taken to Kozhikode medical college hospital for a detailed evaluation.

The medical camp is led by specialists from general medicine, neuro medicine, general surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics, orthopaedics, dermatology, psychiatry, physical medicine and ophthalmology departments in Kozhikode, Alappuzha and Thiruvananthapuram medical colleges.

THE HINDU

01 September 2013

Endosulfan: Cabinet to take up panel report

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: The State Cabinet will deliberate on the recommendations of the C.N. Ramachandran Nair Commission that studied the feasibility of setting up a tribunal to decide the compensation for endosulfan victims in the district, Agriculture Minister K. P. Mohanan has said.

The Cabinet will also discuss threadbare the concerns aired by the district-level endosulfan victims cell, Mr. Mohanan, who also holds charge

of the district, said.

He was chairing a special meeting of the cell at the Collectorate conference hall here on Saturday.

The Minister's remarks came after members of the cell unanimously called for rejecting the adverse report by Mr. Nair and seeking the setting up of a tribunal without delay.

The members pointed out serious lacunae in the report, which they alleged absolved the State-owned Plantation Corporation of Kerala and pesticide manufacturing

firms of carrying out prolonged aerial spraying of endosulfan in cashew estates in 11 panchayat limits in the district, paving the way for serious health and ecological hazards.

They maintained that the commission was vocal on issues that did not come under its purview and the report was prepared without making a proper study.

The commission did not look into the shortcomings of the National Human Rights Commission-suggested compensation package nor did it

examine the official list of victims. Instead, it considered the ongoing relief offered to the victims as part of the compensation, they said.

The members urged the government to penalise the pesticide companies for carrying out indiscriminate aerial spraying for over two decades.

Mr. Mohanan said another expert committee would visit Nenchamparambu in Karaduka panchayat within a week. It is apprehended that unused pesticide is secretly buried in the locality, where a few peo-

ple have complained of complicated diseases.

He said tests carried out on soil and waterbodies in the locality had failed to establish the presence of pesticide residues. The decision to go in for a second visit by an expert committee was made to allay the fears of the people.

The Minister praised people's representatives, district officials, physicians, and paramedical staff for conducting a five-day special medical camp recently to help fresh victims find place on the official list.

THE HINDU

23 June 2014

Endosulfan victims to launch indefinite hunger strike today

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Thiruvananthapuram:

In protest against the government failure to honour the assurances it had given to the endosulfan victims, the public forum for endosulfan-affected would launch an indefinite hunger strike in front of the secretariat here on June 23.

According to forum president T Sobha and secretary Ambalathara Krishnan, the state government had failed to provide the relief it promised to the victims after the strike in front of the Cliff House in January.

Though the government had agreed to give the financial assistance recommended by the national



The public forum for endosulfan-affected claimed that the state government had failed to provide the financial aid recommended by the national human rights commission

human rights commission, it did not keep its word. It was giving assistance on instalment basis in only 15 panchayats.

As many as 5,500 people in 27 panchayats and three corporation wards in Kasaragod were detected with health problems connected with the use of endosulfan.

Though it was promised that the debts of farmers

on the verge of suicide would be written off and the report of Justice Ramachandran Nair would be rejected, the government failed to honour such demands.

Justice Ramachandran's report gives the victims choice to either accept the tribunal's compensation or battle it out in court at their own expense.

The Indian EXPRESS

31 January 2019

Mothers of endosulfan victims begin hunger strike in T'Puram

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ T'Puram

₹5 lakh

is the amount the Supreme Court approved for the victims

6,212

victims have received the compensation. 3,547 victims are yet to receive compensation

MOTHERS of endosulfan victims along with their children started a hunger strike in front of the Secretariat on Wednesday. The same was organised by the People's Movement for Endosulfan Victims, formed in 2012 which has been demanding proper rehabilitation and healthcare facilities. After several fights, in an order dated January 2017, the Supreme Court approved ₹5 lakh for the endosulfan victims and 6,212 victims have received the compensation. But 3,547 victims are yet to receive compensation.

Social worker Daya Bai is staging an indefinite fast along with the victims. She has alleged a big plot behind the denial of benefits

to endosulfan victims. She wondered how the bureaucrats can exclude victims who were identified by government doctors from the beneficiary list. "Why was there a reexamination? Is the government seeing those dying a miserable death?" she asked.

The victims have prepared a beneficiary list including their needs where healthcare facilities should be provided to all victims free of cost. According to the victims, 1,905 grantees identified at the periodical medical camp conducted in 2017 should be added to the beneficiary list, while the 2011 medical camp has identified 1,318 eligible victims and among them, 610 were not added to the list.

They have demanded writing-off

of loans, scientific and logical rehabilitation, the need for a tribunal system to avoid wrongful dismissal and renewal of ration cards. There was a stress on the need to provide ₹2,200 monthly pension for the mentally challenged and ₹1,200 as 'Santhwana Pension'. They have also proposed to increase the pension to ₹5,000 per month and provide job opportunities for at least a member from the endosulfan-affected families.

The protesters also want the government to act upon the removal of endosulfan from godowns, which was earlier directed by the government in January 2014. Need to improve facilities in BUDS schools was also put forward by the protesters.

THE HINDU

02 February 2019

State's talks with endosulfan victims fail

₹68-crore rehabilitation village for the affected to come up at Mooliyar in Kasaragod

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The State government has failed to reach an agreement with representatives of endosulfan victims from Kasaragod who have been on a sit-in in front of the Secretariat here since Wednesday.

Health Minister K.K. Shylla and Revenue Minister E. Chandrasekharan held a closed-door meeting with them on Friday. The State's decision to whittle down the list of persons purportedly eligible for compensation to a more "manageable number" proved to be the sole stumbling block to an amicable settlement, officials said.

Later, the Minister requested the representatives of the Endosulfan Peeditha Janakiya Munnani to call off the agitation. She said the go-

vernment would address their grievances and extend compensation to the genuinely affected. She also promised to write off mortgages up to ₹3 lakh incurred by the families.

Earlier, the Assembly witnessed a walkout by the Opposition after the Speaker denied leave for an adjournment motion. A ₹68-crore rehabilitation village for those affected would be set up at Mooliyar village in Kasaragod, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan told the Assembly. The Centre was yet to provide the ₹483 crore sought by the State since 2012.

The government had included 287 persons in the affected list after a medical camp. Another 87 persons were added after a review.



Finishing touches: Surendran Kookanam of Kannur gives finishing touches to his relief work of Bhagavathy Theyyam (Ammu Theyyam) dedicated to the mothers of endosulfan victims. Its sale proceeds are for the mothers of the victims who are on a satyagraha in front of the Secretariat. • S. MAHISHA

THE HINDU

04 February 2019

Govt. relents, endosulfan agitation ends

Chief Minister agrees to bring more families within the ambit of compensation programme

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The representatives of the victims of endosulfan poisoning in Kasaragod district called off their five-day-old sit-in in front of the Secretariat on Sunday after the State government conceded to their demand to bring more affected families within the ambit of the State's compensation and rehabilitation programme.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan invited the Endosulfan Feeditha Janakiya Munnani for reconciliatory talks on the weekend holiday after the forum staged a march to his official residence in the morning.

The demonstrators included 30 mothers with health complications caused by pesticide exposure and their children, several of them handicapped by congenital deformities.

With Congress leader V.M. Sudheeran and social activist Dayabai pitting themselves in the vanguard of the protest, the government did not want to risk allowing the agitation to acquire a political dimension.

The marchers were also piqued by Health Minister K.K. Shylaja's comment on Saturday that the Munnani had endangered endosulfan-impaired children by parading them in public.

The Chief Minister's office



Search for succour: Activist Dayabai consoles Subaida and her daughter Fatima, an endosulfan victim, after ending her three-day-long fast for the victims in front of the Secretariat on Sunday. **—S. MAHESHA**

proactively engaged the Munnani also to pre-empt the Opposition from making political capital out of the emotive issue in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections.

Mr. Vijayan's private secretary M.V. Jayarajan laid the groundwork for the reconciliation by holding informal talks with Munnani lead-

ers. Mr. Sudheeran pitched in by making a personal appeal to Mr. Vijayan on the phone. Subsequently, the Mr. Vijayan directed the Munnani leaders to meet him at his conference hall in the Secretariat.

The government accepted the demand of the Munnani to include youngsters diag-

nosed in 2017 with signs of 'plausible' pesticide impairment on the current list of the 1,905 persons involved in the State's endosulfan compensation scheme.

Cautious optimism

Mr. Vijayan also promised to extend the scheme beyond the 11 panchayats marred by

the aerial spraying of pesticide to those affected in nearby localities. He also promised more special schools for children with deformities.

The demonstrators welcomed the development with cautious optimism and vowed to be back if the State went back on its word.

Endosulfan victims stage protest march to Cliff House

Govt. takes a favourable stance towards their demands

STAFF REPORTER
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Braving the searing sun, the agitating lot of endosulfan victims took out a rally from the Secretariat to the Cliff House, the official residence of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, on Sunday.

The protest march proved to be decisive with the government later taking a favourable stance towards their demands.

The agitators, along with their ailing children, were blocked by a sizeable posse of police at the Devaswom Board junction en route to the Cliff House.

Dignified lives

Addressing the gatherers, former Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president V.M. Sudheeran said that the endosulfan victims would not have been forced to struggle all their



Protest: Mothers of endosulfan victims staging a protest march to the Chief Minister's residence at Cliff House in Thiruvananthapuram on Sunday to protest against the Government's apathy towards them. **—S. MAHESHA**

way to the State capital if the successive governments had taken a compassionate view of their plight.

He pointed out that he has firmly stood by the protesters right from the rule of

V.S. Achuthanandan-led government without any political interests. "That they were now forced to knock on the Chief Minister's doors for their right to lead dignified lives is nothing but a pitiable

state of affairs in democracy. They have not come with any political agenda, but seeking the government's mercy with the hope that democracy will never fail them," he said.

Mr. Sudheeran added that

the government must never persist with technicalities while dealing with the particular issue.

"Governments must not act on the whims of those bureaucrats, who deem it unne-

cessary in understanding the situation on the ground and cling on to technical aspects. It is illogical to fix geographical boundaries while identifying victims. The government cannot discount the fact possibility that the pesticide which was aerially sprayed could have spread beyond the identified region through air and water," he said.

No choice

Endosulfan Feeditha Janakeeya Munnani president Muneesa Ambalathara said that the protesters had no choice, but to carry their children wherever they went. "We would never have knowingly subjected our children to any hardships if we had any other choice. We did not intend for them to become any display objects as some have blamed us," she said.

Senior journalist Geetha Nazeer, Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) State general secretary Sonia George and social activist M. Shajar Khan were among those who spoke on the occasion.

SEE ALSO > PAGE 4

The Indian EXPRESS

04 February 2019

Endosulfan: Indefinite stir by victims' mothers called off

Q I'm quite happy the government has agreed to our demands. So we're calling off the protest. And I believe all those eligible will receive the benefits on time

Daya Bai

The protest

Mothers with endosulfan-ravaged children had gone on protest demanding speedy disbursement of compensation and implementation of the rehabilitation package.



Social activist Daya Bai with an endosulfan-affected girl in front of the Secretariat after ending the agitation | AFP/GETTY

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @TPuram

THE indefinite agitation by mothers of endosulfan victims and the hunger strike by social activist Daya Bai to put pressure on the government to agree to their demands was called off on Sunday, following the undertaking given by the Chief Minister.

The protest under the aegis of Endosulfan Pveditha Janakeeya Munnani (EPJM) in front of Secretariat here had been on since Wednesday before the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) adopted a conciliatory stand at the mediatory talks convened on Sunday. Incidentally, the CMO called the meeting after the protesters took out a march to the Chief Minister's official residence.

M V Jayarajan, private secretary to the Chief Minister, told reporters here the demands raised by the mothers will indeed be addressed. "The government will take steps to include victims, who had turned 18 in 2017, in the list of beneficiaries," he said. • More on P6

THE TIMES OF INDIA

04 February 2019

Endosulfan victims end protest as govt relents

More People To Be Included In The List Of Beneficiaries

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Thiruvananthapuram: Endosulfan victims who were on a hunger strike in front of the secretariat demanding that more people be included in the list for compensation, ended their strike on Sunday following an assurance by chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

On the fifth day of the agitation, the protesters led by activist Daya Bai, marched towards the official residence of the chief minister following which the chief minister's office intervened to settle the protest. Vijayan's private secretary M V Jayarajan and health minister's private secretary P Santosh held discussions with the victims and later the chief minister himself joined the talks.

It was decided at the meeting that people who were identified as endosulfan victims during a medical



Endosulfan victims during the Cliff House march on Sunday

camp conducted in 2017 but were excluded from the list of beneficiaries prepared by the government would now be considered eligible for financial aid. Health authorities had identified 1,905 victims at the camp.

"Those who were below 18 years of age in the list prepared after the medical camp in 2017 will be considered eligible for the compensation right away. They

need not be subjected to any further medical tests. But those who were above 18 years of age then will be considered eligible for the compensation after holding a detailed discussion. The district collector has been asked to hold talks with health authorities," said M V Jayarajan after the discussion.

The convener of the endosulfan action committee

Ambalathara Kunjikrishnan said they were happy with the outcome of the discussion and the chief minister has agreed to meet their demands, including opening BUDS schools (for kids with special needs) without any delay.

The protesters, including mothers of children suffering from deformities, had launched the hunger strike alleging that the government was turning a blind eye to the fact that more people were affected by the pesticide.

Though they held a discussion with revenue and health ministers on Friday, the talks failed. The action committee members made it clear that they will end the protest only after getting a written assurance from the government that the list will be extended.

The chief minister had earlier assured the assembly that the government would initiate discussions to end the hunger strike.

DECCAN Chronicle

04 February 2019



An endosulphan affected child faints during a dharna in front of Cliff house demanding welfare measures to all Endosulphan victims, on Sunday in Thiruvananthapuram. —PEETHAMBARAN PAYERI

CM concedes, endosulfan stir ends

DC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
FEB 3

The Kasargod endosulfan victims and activists, who have been on an indefinite strike before the secretariat here since January 30, called off their agitation following talks held with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Sunday. The chief minister agreed to consider their demands, including financial assistance to all victims irrespective of the panchayats they belong to and inclusion of 1905 people coming under the Biological Plausible (BP) category in the list of victims.

■ The agitators wanted compensation to all the victims as per the Supreme Court ruling and waiver of the loans of the victims.

"The district collector will be asked to evaluate the situation and update the list," said the CMO in a press release.

Those who have already been recommended by the medical team need not go for re-examination, it said.

The protesters had staged a grievance march from the secretariat to the Cliff House on Sunday morning. Those who attended the talks

with the chief minister included Ambalathara Kunjikkrisnan, convener,

Endosulfan Protest Action Council, Ambikasuthan Mangad, Muneesa, K. Samiura, Aruni Chandran and K. Santhosh Kumar.

Social activist Daya Bai, who led the agitation by eight affected families before the secretariat, thanked all those who stood with the agitators.

"I have not taken the comments of the ministers against me seriously," said a teary-eyed Daya Bai.

The decisions taken during the talks held by the agitators recently with health and revenue

ministers K. K. Shailaja and E. Chandrasekharan respectively will also be considered for implementation. The agitators wanted compensation to all the victims as per the Supreme Court ruling and waiver of the loans of the victims.

Writers and activists M. Mukundan, Sara Joseph, Kalpetta Narayanan, Sunil P. Elayidam, Madhupal, and Ambikasuthan Mangad had supported their demands. They asked the government to change its stand that endosulfan was sprinkled only in 11 panchayats in Kasargod and that only people living in that area were affected.

The Indian EXPRESS

01 February 2020

ENDOSULFAN VICTIMS REMIND GOVERNMENT OF ITS PROMISES

The affected families hold protest exactly a year after government promised them all help

UNNIKRISHNAN S @TPutnam

MUHAMMAD FASAL, an eight-year-old boy sits uncomfortably on his mother Sameera's lap. The frequent movement of cars and bikes on MG Road in front of Secretariat would have caught the attention of a boy of his age. But Fasal sits drooping most of the time. At times his demeanour changes for a violent jerky movements which his mother struggles to manage. They hail from Kinanoor Karindalam, a village in Kasaragod located 540 kilometres away from the Secretariat.

They are part of the Endosulfan Peeditha Janakeeya Munnani (EPJM) or People's Movement for Endosulfan Victims, formed by families affected by the damaging use of the pesticide in Kasaragod district. The families are back on the road to protest exactly a year after the government promised them all help for rehabilitation. Amidst the tall claims, the families feel cheated by the government.

Fasal who develops epileptic seizure frequently was included in the 511 beneficiaries identified after a medical camp. But the family is yet to get any official document that would have made them eligible for financial and medical aid. "E Chandrasekharan had come to my house during election campaign and assured that Fasal would be included in the list. He repeated the assurance when he became revenue minister. But we are still waiting," says Sameera. Chandrasekharan represents Kanhangad constituency.

Fasal's father Iqbal K K who works as a driver is the sole breadwinner of the family. The family takes Fasal to a private hospital in Kanhangad. They usually go by bus for economic reasons. It takes one-and-a-half hours to reach



Muhammad Fasal lying on the lap of his mother Sameera during the protest gathering held in front of the Secretariat in Thiruvananthapuram | B P DEEPU

there. But it is the complications that develop in the night that Sameera dreads the most. "We take taxi or ambulance to Mangalore if he needs specialised care," said Sameera. But such trips are expensive and wreck the family's financial condition.

The parents who floated EPJM reminded the government of its failed promises. There have been several protests almost every year from 2012 in the capital. Daya Bai, the 80-year-old social activist, once again led the group in front of the Secretariat to highlight the cause. She even staged a skit that spoke about the various concerns raised by the parents.

They have come from 15 villages in Kasaragod such as Muliya, Kayyur, Periy, Cheemeni, Rajapuram, Karadka, Adhur, Enmakaje and Kumbadaje. The indiscriminate use of endosulfan, a neuro toxin, for a long period over plantations have led to deaths and health problems in people. The health issues include cancer, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, mental disorder and infertility.

Demands of Endosulfan Peeditha Janakeeya Munnani

- Implement Supreme Court verdict of January 10, 2017
- Start medical college and other treatment facilities
- Start a tribunal to settle cases
- Write off debts of victim families
- Provide facilities for BUDS schools
- Reinstate ration facilities
- Destroy endosulfan buried in various places
- Implement model village project
- Increase pension by ₹5,000

NEW PROMISES

The government has announced various infrastructure facilities and financial aid for rehabilitation. Minister for Health and Social Justice K K Shailaja will inaugurate the rehabilitation facilities for Endosulfan victims at Muliya village in Kasaragod on February 8. The government is spending ₹58.75 crore for the rehabilitation village. The special schools in Endosulfan-affected areas such as Muliya, Kayyur, Cheemeni, Karadka and Kumbadaje would be upgraded to rehabilitation centres for mother and child.



It is very difficult to carry my 11-year-old son Ahmed Ameen these days. He is completely immobile and does not even cry

— Abu Haneef of Aljanur, a school teacher and father of two children affected by various diseases

The parents will take care of their children even without any help. But I do not know what will happen to my daughter after my death

— E Thamban, a single parent in his late 60s

There are people who are still shy about revealing their plight. I am fighting for those too

— Jameela Ashraf of Ambalathara, who was among the four mothers who successfully challenged the government in Supreme Court

There are children dying for lack of proper treatment. The pension was stopped five months back

— secretary of EPJM, Ambalathara Kunhikrishnan

My son Ajith has been under ayurvedic treatment for long. I am hopeful of his recovery one day

— P Krishnan of Badiyadka

I am not able to work and take care of my 18-year-old son Riyaz after the death of my wife Mariyumma in 2017

— Muhammed of Enmakaje

The Indian EXPRESS

23 January 2021

Collector calls for re-examination of endosulfan aid beneficiaries

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Kasaragod

DISTRICT Collector D Sajith Babu recommended a re-examination of all the 6,727 people identified by the government as endosulfan victims after he found financial irregularities worth crores of rupees in the disbursement of aid and solatium to the survivors.

The findings are part of a report he submitted to the Department of Social Justice on July 24, 2020.

The report was made public on Friday by Kerala Agricultural University's professor K M Sree Kumar, a vocal denier of the endosulfan-triggered disaster.

At the end of his 73-page report, the collector made four recommendations. He asked the state government to formulate criteria to identify endosulfan-affected patients, and re-examine all the 6,727 patients now on the list.



He asked the government to take steps to remove unmerited persons from the list. He also asked the government to deploy ICDS supervisors to collect one-time data on all endosulfan by visiting their houses, and then assign Anganwadi staff to visit the houses and submit a status report every month.

Social activists welcomed the collector's decision to weed out undeserving persons from the list of endosulfan patients but condemned the recommendations to re-examine all the 6,727 patients.

"The government already has a set of guidelines to identify endosulfan patients. Medical

camps are conducted based on the guidelines and patients are identified after a rigorous process," said writer Ambikasuthan Mangad.

"A blanket call to re-examine all the patients is an attempt to scuttle the government's welfare programmes under the cover of a few irregularities," he said.

Endosulfan Peeditha Janakeeya Munnani's Ambalathara Kunhikrishnan said the collector's recommendation to re-examine all the patients was in line with his prejudice against endosulfan-affected families.

"We get a feeling that the government posted Sajith Babu in Kasaragod with the sole objective to discredit endosulfan victims and sabotage the welfare programmes from the inside," he said.

To be sure, the collector in his report was critical of the officials and the medical officers who perpetrated the alleged financial irregularities.

THE HINDU

07 October 2021

Endosulfan victims disowned: UDF

FROM PAGE ONE

The LDF Government had conducted 38 camps and identified 6,727 persons for endosulfan compensation, categorising them for financial assistance, she said.

The Government would reconstitute the remediation cell. The proposed Government Medical College Hospital in Kasaragod would have a separate multidisciplinary unit for treating endosulfan victims. The Government has distributed ₹285 crore as compensation to endosulfan victims, she said.

Token protest

Following the Social Welfare Minister's reply to the notice, Speaker M. B. Rajesh denied permission for the adjournment motion.

Meanwhile, a large number of endosulfan-affected individuals and their family



The writing is on the wall: Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan puts his signature on the body of Surendran who made himself a canvas in solidarity with the endosulfan victims during their protest near the Secretariat in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday. **—S. MAHENDRA**

members reached the State capital on Wednesday morning from Kasaragod in order to participate in a token protest

est demanding the speedy disbursement of compensation as well as implementation of various rehabilitation initia-

tives. The day-long protest was conducted under the aegis of a solidarity committee. **(with inputs from PTI)**

UDF: Govt. disowns endosulfan victims

'Remediation cell inert for over a year'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) on Wednesday slammed the State Government for leaving thousands of endosulfan victims in Kasaragod districts in the lurch.

Seeking leave of the Assembly for an adjournment motion on the issue, Indian Union Muslim League (IUM) legislator N.A. Neelakumar said the "remediation cell" tasked with the welfare of the endosulfan-hit had been inert for over a year. The Government has repeatedly ignored the demand to reconstitute the cell. He demanded that a medical board re-examine at least 2,700 people diagnosed with signs of pesticide poisoning.

Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan said the Government had not included at least 1,000 people diag-

nosed with pesticide poisoning on the list of endosulfan beneficiaries. At least 3,000 have not received the compensation ordered by the Supreme Court. Endosulfan victims had no access to proper medical care. Expensive private hospitals in Mangaluru in neighbouring Karnataka were their only recourse. He called a former District Collector who compiled a report against the interests of the affected children as the "agent of the endosulfan company".

Govt. reply

Social Welfare Minister R. Bindu said the UDF had fought for the rehabilitation of endosulfan victims. The Democratic Youth Federation of India had moved the Supreme Court for compensating them and won the award.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

THE HINDU

16 October 2021

Return endosulfan to company: protesters

STAFF REPORTER
KASARAGOD

Disposal of endosulfan stocks faces a new hurdle, with a popular movement taking out a protest march to Plantation Corporation of Kerala (PCK) godowns in Kasaragod district. The protesters have called for the pesticide stocks to be returned to the company for safe disposal.

Inaugurating a protest march at the Periya Plantation Corporation godown, Rajmohan Unnithan, Congress leader and MP, said he and his party would stand with the affected people against the decision to dispose of and deactivate endosulfan at their current storage. Mr. Unnithan said such a decision had been taken by authorities when the affected people had not yet been

compensated as ordered by the Supreme Court.

Dinesh Kartha, State general secretary of the Kerala Congress, said the endosulfan stored in the PCK godowns at various places in Kasaragod district posed a threat to public safety.

About 1,438 litres of endosulfan have been stored in PCK godowns for over 20 years. The endosulfan solution is stored in 914.55 litres in Periya, 73.75 litres in Cheemeni and 450 litres in Rajapuram.

2012 action

In 2012, when there was threat of endosulfan leaks from old godowns, they were transferred to new godowns through a scheme called Operation Blossom Spring. Authorities at the time announced that endo-



Better safe than sorry: Rajmohan Unnithan, MP, inaugurating a protest march at Periya in Kasaragod on Friday against the decision to deactivate endosulfan in current storages.

sulfan in the reservoirs would be deactivated soon, but no action was taken, said Mr. Kartha.

The process of deactivation at Kasaragod itself is of great concern to the people of the district. Mr. Kartha

said Kasaragod, which had suffered the most from endosulfan, should not be turned into a chemical laboratory again. He said the decision to deactivate endosulfan in Kasaragod district should be withdrawn.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

17 October 2021

'Endosulfan victims being failed again'

3,713 People In Compensation List Yet To Receive Aid, Alleges Oppn

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Thiruvananthapuram: Extending support to the Endosulfan victims protesting before the secretariat, the opposition on Wednesday raised the victims' grievances in the assembly alleging that the government has not been able to implement the Supreme Court order pronounced four years ago.

The opposition also pointed out that the remediation cell set up for coordinating various departments to address the grievances of Endosulfan victims has been dysfunctional for the past one year.

Quoting the numbers and the Supreme Court verdict, opposition leader V D Satheesan said as many as 3,713 victims in the list have not received any financial help yet though the court had ordered in 2017 to disburse Rs 5 lakh each



Leader of opposition V D Satheesan & deputy leader P K Kunhalikutty put their signatures on the painted bare body of a protestor seeking justice for endosulfan victims, in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday

to them within three months.

"As many as 1,031 persons who were found to be victims of Endosulfan in 2017 itself have not been included in the list of the affected. There are no trauma care centres or even neurologists in any of the hospitals in the district and they are forced to go to

Mangaluru. After the pandemic broke out, it has become more difficult to visit the hospitals due to travel restrictions and as a result, as many 20 children have died in the area," Satheesan said.

Citing Rachel Carson's environmental classic "Silent Spring" that drew attention

to the dangers of toxic chemicals such as DDT entering the food chain, which subsequently led courts to fix "strict liability" on the companies responsible, Satheesan said the Supreme Court in the country has modified strict liability to "ultimate liability" on those responsible. In the case of Endosulfan, it is the state which is responsible, and ultimate responsibility lies with the state, he said.

The opposition also vehemently criticized the report of former Kasaragod district collector D Sajith Babu who had recommended that the list of Endosulfan victims has to be revised as several ineligible persons have been included in it.

"The list was prepared after three rounds of medical screening. The district collector says it is wrong. The government should clarify whether it is the govern-

ment's policy," he said.

Social justice and higher education minister R Bindu said the collector's report is not the government's policy in the matter. Assuring that the remediation cell will be reconstituted soon, the minister read out a list of financial aid under various schemes and programmes already given to the victims, including Rs 171 crore as compensation, Rs 16.8 crore for the treatment of the victims, and waiving of power bills. She also said that the work on setting up a medical college in Kasaragod is progressing.

Earlier, raising the matter, Kasaragod MLA NA Nellikunnu said the former collector has been behaving as if he is the agent of Endosulfan manufacturing companies and demanded that the government should make its stand clear with regards to his recommendations.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

21 December 2021

'Endosulfan being used to poison waterholes, kill tigers in MP'

P.Naveen@timesgroup.com

Bhopal: Endosulfan, an insecticide, is being used to kill tigers and other wildlife in Madhya Pradesh, say activists, who have moved an intervening application in the high court, seeking implementation of National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) guidelines.

The petition says waterholes are being poisoned to kill wild animals for their organs. The insecticide is being phased out globally, but not fast enough.

"A recent investigation has found that a tigress, two cubs and three deer died due to poisoning of waterholes in Pench Tiger Reserve in the last two months, and the poison used was the dangerous 'endosulfan'. It's banned globally, but its continued use here is a cause of alarm because of the threat it poses to human health, wildlife and the environment," said advocate Aditya Sanghi, who has filed the petition for social activist Ajay Dubey.

"After tigers are killed, poachers remove their intestines and wash out other organs, which are then smuggled in the world market," said Dubey.

The application seeks directives for the constitution of a special tiger protection force (STPF) in MP by implementing NTCA guidelines as "more and more tigers are being killed using rare poisons



and electric wires".

Sanghi said the petition has been pending since 2016 but has assumed significance as poaching of tigers and other wild animals has "increased in the past year".

"It is on record that 36 tiger deaths have been reported in Madhya Pradesh this year. Often, without a proper investigation, the authorities declare that the deaths were due to infighting," he said.

"The fact is that poachers are involved in poisoning wildlife in the core area and buffer zones of tiger reserves," he added.

Many farmhouses and resorts have been constructed adjacent to the boundary of the core areas of national parks in Madhya Pradesh, he added, pointing out that this is not permissible under the law.

In Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (BTR), an investigation revealed that electrocution is turning out to be a frequent method to kill tigers but nothing has been done to stop this, Sanghi said.

"After the buffer areas were opened to the public, the

A petition filed before the Bhopal HC says waterholes are being poisoned to kill wild animals for their organs. The insecticide, Endosulfan, is being phased out globally, but not fast enough

authorities recommended creating a post of deputy director-buffer but nothing has happened on that count or to control poaching activities in the state. In fact, a high-level committee has recommended deploying a Special Tiger Protection Force in BTR, considering the poaching threat perspective. Unfortunately, more than seven years have passed since NTCA recommended these measures but nothing has happened yet," says the petition.

Opening up the buffer and core areas to tourism has led to a rise in poaching of tigers, the petition suggests.

"Unfortunately poaching is rampant and increasing day by day, but for reasons difficult to understand, the authorities are just interested in tourism because it creates funds," it adds.

Dubey has prayed in his petition that wildlife must be protected at any cost and tourism should not be the primary objective.

He seeks a direction to the state authorities to coordinate with NTCA and immediately implement its recommendations.

THE HINDU

17 May 2022

Kerala did zilch for endosulfan-hit: SC

Bench questions govt. delay in paying compensation despite its directive in 2017

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has slammed the Kerala government for doing "virtually nothing" for endosulfan pesticide exposure victims. The court said the State's inaction was "appalling" and amounted to a breach of the top court's 2017 judgment, which had ordered it to pay ₹5 lakh each to the victims in three months.

Five years since the judgment, the court has realised that only eight out of 3,704 victims have been paid compensation.

Of the 3,704 victims, 102 are bedridden, 326 mentally challenged, 201 are physically disabled, 119 wrecked by cancer while 2,966 others fall in the residual category.

"The Government of Kerala has done virtually nothing



Endosulfan victims protesting in the Kerala capital last year. *S MAHINSHA

for five years. Besides the fact that the delay is appalling, the inaction is in breach of the orders of this court," a Bench led by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud observed sharply in its order in a contempt petition filed by those affected by the aerial spraying of endosulfan on cashew plantations in Kasaragod district.

The court noted that though the State government had, in January 2022, authorised the disbursement of an additional ₹200 crore, so far only eight victims have got ₹5 lakh each out of the allotted money.

These eight happen to be the victims who had sought contempt action against the State in the Supreme Court. All these years, the State seemed to have ignored others like them, voiceless, faceless and too poor to approach the apex court, but nevertheless maimed for life by the toxin.

'Pitiable condition'

"We fail to understand the logic or the rationale of the State government in disbursing compensation only to those who have the ability to move this court... There are

a large number of victims to whom no compensation has been provided despite the passage of over five years since the date of the judgment of this court.

Marginalised section

Most of the victims, as the data before the court indicate, are from the marginalised segments of society.

Many of the victims are in a pitiable condition to whom compensation on an urgent basis has to be provided," the Supreme Court observed in the order.

"The right to health is an integral part of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution. Without health, the faculties of living have little meaning," the court noted.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

22 May 2022

Endosulfan victims, relatives hail apex court verdict

Victims miffed at govt. 'delay' in treatment and rehabilitation

C.P. SARKI
KASARAGOD

K. Praveena of Masungal, a few km from Kanhangad municipality, is worried about the future of her 15-year-old son born with cerebral palsy, a victim of the endosulfan pesticide sprayed across plantations in the district earlier.

"His behaviour has changed with age. He often turns aggressive at the slightest disturbance," says Ms. Praveena, 38, who quit her career at a school in Madikail to take care of the child when her husband abandoned them. Hers is not an isolated case of the appalling condi-

tion of families of endosulfan victims residing near the cashew plantations in Kasaragod. Of the 3,704 victims, 302 are bedridden, 326 mentally challenged, 201 are physically disabled, 119 suffering from cancer while 2,966 others fall in the residual category.

Long wait for justice

The recent Supreme Court order pulling up the Kerala government for delaying the compensation to the victims has rekindled the hopes of their families. "Yes, it is a relief for us after a long wait for justice," says Ms. Praveena, who makes a living teaching music online. In 2017, the apex court had ordered that the government pay ₹5 lakh each to the victims in three months.

Despite the court ruling,

these families are miffed over the perceived delay in getting medical facilities, treatment, or rehabilitation to cope with life-long health issues arising out of the effects of endosulfan.

"We are forced to depend on hospitals with specialist care facilities in nearby Mangalore," says Rajeswari, who lives with her 21-year-old mentally challenged daughter and her nonagenarian mother in a run down area at Chengala.

Others like S. Pravitha, however, desperately yearns for a B.U.S school, a free and open special institution, set up by the government for mentally challenged children of poor families. "Such schools should be opened in every grama panchayat to help our children," she says.

Herself a victim of endo-



In deep distress: Rajeswari with her daughter, an endosulfan victim, at their house at Chengala grama panchayat in Kasaragod district. *C.P. SARKI

sulfan exposure, TV. Sajitha, a resident of Cheerment, is suffering from cancer and chronic kidney disease. "Kasaragod requires a pallia-

tive care hospital as well as a super-specialty hospital for treating us," she says, feeling relieved after the Supreme Court order.

Based on a report by the National Institute of Occupational Health, the National Human Rights Commission recommended to the State

government in 2010 to establish a Centrally sponsored palliative care hospital in Kasaragod. "Had the recommendations been implemented then, these patients about 6,700 of them spread over 11 villages, would not have to go through this ordeal," says M.A. Rahman, an anti-endosulfan activist.

K.K. Ashokan, secretary, Confederation of Endosulfan Victims Right Collective, accuses the authorities of delaying the completion of rehabilitation village in 2 acres at Mulyar. "Now these hapless patients have to run from primary health centre to the district hospital to government-sponsored Neel medical stores for treatment and medicines," he says.

After confirming the deadly effects of the pesticide, the government banned its use in 2005.

01 June 2022

Demands of endosulfan victims unfulfilled

Palliative care hospital and rehabilitation village

G.P. SAJJU
KASARAGOD

The 58-year-old mother and her 28-year-old daughter found dead in their house at Panathady village in Kasaragod has brought back the focus on problems and challenges facing families of endosulfan victims.

This is not the first case. Eight years ago, an endosulfan victim, affected by cancer, allegedly ended his life when his name failed to appear in the list of victims affected by the agricultural.

Better infra

While the Opposition has termed the deaths as government-sponsored, activists feel that better infrastructure facilities, including palliative care hospitals, setting up of rehabilitation villages, and the recommendations of the National Human Rights Commission are yet

to be implemented. K.K. Ashokan, secretary of the Confederation of Endosulfan Victims' Rights Collective, said the mother was under huge stress after her endosulfan-affected daughter was sent back from the special school at Parappa. "Had there been a palliative care hospital, the problems faced by them could have been addressed," Mr. Ashokan said. Endosulfan victims and families continue to face social isolation, and they need palliative care, Mr. Ashokan said.

Palliative care hospital
M.A. Rahman, an activist, said the demand for a palliative care hospital and an endosulfan victims rehabilitation village was yet to be met. Incidentally, the district has over 10,000 patients. "They suffer depression, financial problems, and social boycott in silence," he added.

Even the demand to convert the Tata Trust COVID-19 hospital into a palliative care centre has not been considered yet, he said.

THE HINDU

19 August 2022

Inspect medical facilities given to Kerala endosulfan victims: SC

Court directs Kasaragod District Legal Services Authority to file report in 6 weeks

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the Kasaragod District Legal Services Authority in Kerala to inspect the medical and palliative care facilities provided to endosulfan victims.

A Bench led by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud ordered the legal services authority to submit its report in six weeks.

The order came after victims, represented by senior advocate P.N. Raveendran and advocate Sudheer, complained of the lack of health care infrastructure provided by the State despite the best efforts of the district administration.

"The efforts have to be made at the highest levels in the State government," Mr. Raveendran submitted.

The Bench directed the legal services authority team to examine the facilities provided for healthcare, palliative and physiotherapy in the district, which became the focal point of insecticide contamination affecting hundreds of families. The court asked the legal services authority delegation to visit district hospitals, community and primary health centres to get a thorough and objective assessment of the ground situation.



Sorry state: A file photo of endosulfan victims staging a protest in Thiruvananthapuram.

The State government has recently filed an affidavit informing the apex court about the disbursement of compensation to 98% of the victims.

Advocate Nishu Rajen Shonker, for Kerala, said the ₹5 lakh compensation has reached almost all of the over 3,700 victims.

The State had countered that it has made the necessary medical facilities available to victims.

In May, the apex court slammed the Kerala government for doing "virtually nothing" for endosulfan pesticide exposure victims.

The court had said the State's inaction was "appalling" and amounted to a breach of the apex court's judgment in 2017, which had ordered the State to pay ₹5 lakh each to the victims in three months.

Of the 3,704 victims, 102 are bedridden, 326 are mentally challenged, 201 are physically disabled, 119 are wrecked by cancer while 2,966 others fall in the residual category.

"The right to health is an integral part of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution. Without health, the faculties of living have little meaning," the court had noted in the case.

The Indian EXPRESS

08 August 2022

DRAGGED DOWN BY 'LACK OF' SYSTEM

Caregivers of endosulfan victims say they are on brink of breakdown because district does not have centres for persons with disabilities

GEORGE POIKATH | Kasaragod

At 11, I have got it myself," reads Bindu Rajan's WhatsApp profile status in Malayalam.

Bindu's poignant line — left hanging with an ellipsis of three sad face emojis — is true for almost all single parents and caregivers of endosulfan-affected persons with intellectual disabilities.

Caregivers, particularly single parents, say they are on the brink of a breakdown because Kasaragod district does not have institutional centres to take care of persons with intellectual disabilities during working hours.

"I start shivering in fear when it is 3.30 pm," says Bindu, 40. That's the time when Mahatma BUDS School for children with intellectual disabilities in Periyar closes for the day. By 4 pm, the school bus will drop her son Bithal Raj at Maveli Store, a government-run grocer, at Periyar-Bhaskaran near Periyar, where Bindu works as a saleswoman. "The next two and half hours are for me," she says.

Bithal is 17 years old but appears like a 10-year-old with the mental growth of a three-year-

old child. He is extremely violent. He verbally abuses customers of Maveli and adjacent shops, pushes down the two-wheelers, and scratches the cars with stones. He will roll on the dirt and piddle near the highway if he is scolded. Even making him cross the road after he is dropped at the bus stop is exhausting, says his mother. His constant drooling is another put-off for the customers.

He cannot be sent home after school at Rameshwaram because he assaults and bites his older sister Rajana, a PG student at the Central University of Kerala. "Once he put a hot iron on her hand. Another day, when I got home, he had broken four plastic chairs by thrashing them on the floor and Rajana," she says.

But Bindu has no choice but to bring her son to the store. Her husband Rajan, a carpenter, suffered a brain stroke and after being on the bed for three years died in 2018. She needs the job to take care of the family.

Maveli Store pays her a daily wage of ₹575. But in a month she earns only around ₹1,000 to ₹1,100 because half of the month she is forced to take leave to care for Bithal. Every morning, she has to hire an autorickshaw for ₹1



Bindu Rajan in her Maveli Store at Periyar-Bhaskaran near Periyar in Kasaragod

100 to take him to school. The mother and son board a bus in the evening to return home from the shop. "But his mood swings are too frequent and he refuses to board the bus," she says. On those days, she shells out another ₹200 to return

home in a rickshaw. Bithal refuses going to school but once there, he is calm and participates in school activities. "He must be doing all those for my attention. But I have to work," she says.

All Bindu wants from the



Social activist Geeta Raju says a end-of-the-line hunger strike in front of the secretary in Thiruvananthapuram



The test of a two-part series portraits the 'lack of' when and why caregivers and the issues caregivers and single parents of endosulfan victims face in Kasaragod. They voice their hopes to understand their daily struggle

PART-I

government is an institution that will take care of Bindu when she is at work. "This is

the least the government should do. I am not asking for money," she says. But caregivers of endosulfan-affected persons know they would need more: faith than the size of a mustard seed in the government to get such an institution in Kasaragod.

The state government has paid ₹5 lakh each to 6,714 victims of endosulfan as compensation as directed by the Supreme Court. Only 14 more affected families are to get the compensation and the disbursement is held up because of legal

hurdles. Activists and affected families say the government should also provide daycare centres and assistance that the victims would be able to get after the caregivers are gone. On May 30, Vinod Kumar, a cook at a government school in Panathady, said he was allegedly killed by his daughter Rajashree, 20, and ended her life. Neighbours and colleagues said Vinod took the extreme step two days before the school reopened because he did not have a plan to send his daughter with intellectual disabilities when she went to work.

There are several single mothers of not just endosulfan victims but of children with special needs who have shared the thoughts of ending their lives with me because they don't have a support system," says K.K. Ashokan, secretary of the Confederation of Endosulfan Victims' Rights Collective (CERV Collectives), which helps survivors in their legal

fight against the government.

On Saturday (August 6), 12-year-old social activist Danya Binu staged a token hunger strike in front of the Secretary in Thiruvananthapuram demanding daycare centres for endosulfan victims and speciality healthcare facilities in Kasaragod district. She says she will go on an indefinite hunger strike at the same spot on October 2 if the demands are not met.

The painful drag

When Abdul Rahman, 72, was a little boy, his neighbours in Changanassari used to remember him taking his son out in a wheelbarrow for a hair cut or to the moon-and-sony shop to buy him chocolates.

Rahman cannot sit or walk on his own. But today, his father cannot even make him sit on his bed. The 61-year-old Abdul is frail and looks much older. He drags Rahman on the red-cottee floor to move him from one room to another. "It's exhausting," he says, wiping the sweat from his forehead.

After his wife died five years ago, Abdul could not even move his house. Rahman needs his father around for everything. But the father is not complaining. "I am not worried about him. As long as I am alive, he is fine," he says.

The family has got the compensation given to endosulfan victims. But they need more than money. (To be continued)

The Indian EXPRESS

09 August 2022

'WITH 4 BROTHERS TO TAKE CARE OF, THERE'S NO ME'

GEORGE POIKAYIL (Special)

The last time Beethama, 32, left her home at Edoor in Chengalpet area in Kerala was three weeks ago. That was to take her 77-year-old father Abubacker N A to the hospital after he suffered a paralyzing brain stroke. Her relatives pawned their gold jewellery to raise ₹1.25 lakh for meeting the hospital charges. Now he lies on his bed, needing Beethama's assistance and care for everything.

Beethama's place was full even before her father was paralysed. She had shelved her life to take care of her four adult brothers born with intellectual disabilities and identified as victims of endosulfan. Abdul Hameed, 45, is the eldest and can manage to utter a few words. Abdul Rahman, 34, the next, hovers around Beethama with his gummy smile. He cannot speak.

Abdul Kabeer, 30, and Abdul Khader, 28, go to the JUDS School in Poyilakkam everyday and return by 3.30pm. A recent rule prohibits JUDS schools from admitting persons above 13 years. "But Kabeer and Khader were going to the school earlier so they allowed them," says Beethama.

When asked how she takes care of her brothers, she smiles. "It's easy. I don't have to tell them anything. They say and do what they want. I just have to pick up after them," she says.

Beethama shelved her life to take care of her four brothers with disabilities | Maimoona was married when she was 13, now she has five children, three of them endosulfan victims



Maimoona with her son Kabeer (left)

The monthly pension given to the four brothers is the family's only source of income. They get ₹1,600 per month each as disability pension and ₹1,700 each as endosulfan pension. Though endosulfan victims with intellectual disability should get ₹2,200 as monthly pension, the government has cut ₹300 from each of the four brothers in this family, said activist Amalathara Kunjikkrisnan. But endosulfan pension has not come for the past four months, said Beethama.

"We manage with the pension not because we don't have other needs but because we don't have extra money," she says. Marriage is the last thing on her mind.

"My parents are aged and not well. My brothers need me. What wish will I have for myself?" she says. "I only hope the government adopts them after we are gone," she says. For now, she hopes the government will help her start a cottage business.

Maimoona's small im-



Beethama with her brother Abdul Rahman, 34, in their home at Edoor in Chengalpet

tered house precariously sits on the edge of a hill at Pambakkal, 3.5km from Badalackal, on Soolapada road. The stony approach road is too steep and treacherous for cars.

Inside, the small living room is almost fully occupied by a six-seater dining table. The shabby case above the table is decked with small trophies and mementos. "They all belong to Ibrahim Badalackal," says Maimoona, 32, even before adding:

Badalackal, 14, Maimoona's youngest son, is in class 10. "He is a bright boy and too good at lip-reading," she says. He was born deaf and mute. His right

eye is blue and his left eye black. Bright light blinds him. The government has identified him as an endosulfan victim. But Badalackal is the least of Maimoona's worries.

Maimoona was only 13 when her mother Mariyamma, a daily wage labourer, married her to a traveller in 2000. She became a mother the next year. "I did not have a choice. I had to go to work and did not feel my three daughters will be safe at home," says a wrinkle-faced Mariyamma.

Now Maimoona has five children, three of them endosulfan victims, and her husband has

walked out on her and is living with another woman in Pattanam.

The eldest son Mohammed Rasheed, 21, now frequently experiences epileptic seizures. He is not an endosulfan victim.

Her second son Abdul Rasak is 20 but has the growth of a 14-year-old. There was a leak in his heart valve which was corrected with surgery at Kottar Government Medical College Hospital in Pattanam. But he is dependent on his mother and his sister Pathimath Rishana, 18, the only healthy child in the family.

Mariyammah Rishana, 16, was born with two heart defects. A valve in one of the two pumping chambers was missing. It was corrected with surgery when she was at the age of 16 years when she was in class 4.

She also had a defect in the partition separating the two chambers, causing high pressure in the blood vessels in the lungs. The higher pressure led to lower oxygen levels in the body and kept her exhausted. "She could not play or walk. She would turn blue," says Maimoona.

But the young mother, who dropped out in class 7, did not give up on her. She used to carry the girl to school, sit with her through the day and bring her back.



The lack of robust and dynamic centres to monitor the flow of endosulfan and single parents of endosulfan victims with intellectual disabilities, NGOs struggle to meet their daily struggles in the two-part series

PART-II

She spent around ₹80,000 at a private medical college hospital in Mangalore to identify Rishana's defects. But she did not have money for Rishana's second surgery, which would cost ₹3 lakh. After frequent visits to the collectorate, the officials agreed to foot the surgery bill. The operation was done when she was 13 at Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences (AIMS) in Kochi. "Rishana is a fun girl now, talkative and always playing," says Maimoona. But doctors said her heart is weak and she cannot become a mother.

Maimoona is worried about her children and their future but is not ready to sink into despair. She learnt to use the grass cutter and works everyday in an estate to make a living. When there is no grass to cut, she volunteers to cook food for the workers of the estate. She saved ₹50,000 and bought a used Tata Nano car so that she can take her children to hospitals. "I have to live... live for my children," says Maimoona. (Overleaf)

My parents are aged and not well. My brother needs me. What wish will I have for myself? I only hope the government adopts them after we are gone

Beethama, one of endosulfan victims

Tue, 09 August 2022
INDIAN EXPRESS
<https://epaper.newindianexpress.com/c/69942429>

19 October 2022

UDF to support Daya Bai's cause, hold protest

Activist put on intravenous fluids at General Hosp. Oppn leader Satheesan says he will raise the issue with CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @TPuan

EVEN as social activist Daya Bai's health deteriorates, the state government is reluctant to give a clear assurance that her demands for better healthcare facilities for endosulfan victims will be met. It would be nineteen days on Wednesday since she started the hunger strike in front of the Secretariat.

At present, she is admitted to the General Hospital where she is put on intravenous fluids (IV). Her request to go back to the protest venue was rejected by doctors attending to her.

"She is very tired. Her right leg is aching due to an injury she suffered while she was shifted to hospital the first time. Also, her right hand has become stiff and she has difficulties in stretching her hand," said Amalathara Kunjikkrisnan, a member of the Endosulfan Samara Samithi, who met her at the hospital.

Meanwhile, the UDF leadership has extended its support to the agitation. The UDF leadership has decided to hold a protest march to the Secretariat on Sat-

urday demanding justice for her.

The UDF leaders under the aegis of state Congress president K Sudhakaran, Opposition Leader V D Satheesan and IUM general secretary P K Kunhalikutty visited Daya Bai at the hospital. Satheesan later told the media that he would raise the issue with the chief minister.

Samithi's explanation

The samara samithi alleged that

the government has only given vague assurances to Daya Bai. On October 16, ministers Veena George and R Bindu had met Bai and accepted some of her demands. But the minutes of the meeting, issued upon the insistence of Bai, allegedly watered down the promises. According to the samithi office-bearers, the ministers had approved her demand for expert treatment facilities in five major hospitals. Also, it was decided to establish neuro speciality care centre at the district hospital. But the minutes document said: "medical college will be completed in a time-

bound manner", "plans are afoot to make the mother and child hospital functional in two months", and that "necessary facilities will be arranged in other hospitals after inspecting them".

According to the samithi, the ministers had said that daycare centres will be opened for mentally challenged and the bedridden. But the minutes said this demand "will be considered." The samithi office-bearers said Daya Bai had told them that she would continue the protest until the government accepted the demands clearly.



Wed, 19 October 2022
INDIAN EXPRESS
<https://epaper.newindianexpress.com/c/70587107>

THE HINDU

17 May 2022

Wednesday, May 17, 2023
THIRUVANANTHAPURAMTHE HINDU
South

SC transfers endosulfan case to Kerala HC

Supreme Court says with the compensation paid, the only factor left is the provision of medical and palliative care for the victims; the High Court will be in a better position to monitor that aspect; judges ask the Kerala Chief Justice to list the case before his Bench or assign any other Bench

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday transferred to Kerala High Court the responsibility of monitoring the measures taken by the State to provide medical and palliative care for victims of endosulfan contamination.

A Bench led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud said the State has complied with the disbursement of compensation to victims. Senior advocate Jaideep Gupta and advocate Nishe Rajen Shonker,

for Kerala, said the ₹5 lakh compensation has reached almost all of the over 3,700 victims.

The Bench said it has been passing orders from time to time while monitoring the case. Now, with the compensation paid, the only factor left was the provision of medical and palliative care to the victims. The Supreme Court said the High Court was in a "better position" to monitor that aspect.

The court transferred the case to the High Court. It requested the Kerala Chief Justice to list the case



Mothers of endosulfan victims with their children staging a protest in Thiruvananthapuram. FILE PHOTO

before his Bench or assign any other Bench.

On August 18 last year, the top court had directed the Kasaragod District Le-

gal Services Authority to inspect the medical and palliative care facilities provided to endosulfan victims.

The order had come after victims, represented by senior advocate P.N. Ravendran and advocate Sudheer, complained of the lack of health care infrastructure provided by the State despite the best efforts of the district administration.

In May last year, the Supreme Court had slammed the Kerala government for doing "virtually nothing" for Endosulfan pesticide exposure victims.

The court had said the State's inaction was "appalling" and amounted to a breach of the Supreme

Court's judgment in 2017, which had ordered the State to pay ₹5 lakh each to the victims in three months.

Of the victims, 102 are bedridden, 326 are mentally challenged, 201 are physically disabled, and 119 are wrecked by cancer while 2,966 others fall in the residual category.

"The right to health is an integral part of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution. Without health, the faculties of living have little meaning," the court had noted in the case.

