

ENTIRELY PREVENTABLE**There Must Be A Thorough Inquiry Into The Lead Up To The Deaths In Thoothukudi**

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

Sterlite stakes claim to be India’s largest copper producer and is a major presence in Tamil Nadu’s industrial mix. But it has had mixed fortunes over the two decades of its production, including periods when it was under administrative orders of closure, a Rs.100-crore fine imposed for pollution by the Supreme Court in 2013, and consistent opposition from fishermen. Now, there is a fresh injunction and the Madras High Court has restrained it from a proposed capacity expansion plan. This, together with the decision to not renew consent for operation, gives a moment for pause for all sides. An urgent process, such as an all-party meeting, is needed to heal the wounds, and infuse confidence in the community. A credible environmental audit should be undertaken, without compromising on the ‘polluter pays’ principle. The TNPCB, which usually scores poorly on transparency, should commission credible experts to assess the quality of air and water in Thoothukudi. Only such verifiable measures will build public confidence, and make orderly industrialisation viable.

WORD LIST

- **Smelter** : (an installation or factory for smelting a metal from its ore).
Example : a person engaged in the business of smelting
- **Gauge** : (measure, standard)
Synonym : barometer, benchmark, criterion, indicator, meter, pattern, yardstick, basis
- **Irony** : (Sarcasm)
Synonym : humor, paradox, satire, twist, wit, banter, contempt
- **Demonstration** : (display of proof)

- Synonym : expression, manifestation, presentation, show, test, testimony, trial, affirmation, confirmation
- **Cast** : (A throw to the side) (appearance; shade of color)
Synonym : casting, ejection, expulsion, fling, flinging, heaving
 - **Intent** : (determined, resolute)
Synonym : decided, preoccupied, resolved, alert, attending, bent, bound
 - **Compensate** : (adequate, corresponding)
Synonym : comparable, compatible, consistent, proportionate, sufficient, appropriate, equal, fit, fitting
 - **Alienation** : (unfriendliness)
Synonym : disaffection, estrangement, indifference, separation, breach, remoteness
 - **Snuffed out** : (Kill)
Synonym : blow away, bump off, chill, dispatch, dust, grease, murder, waste, whack
 - **Accusation** : (charge of wrongdoing, fault)
Synonym : allegation, complaint, denunciation, impeachment, indictment, recrimination
 - **Sniper** : (gunman)
Synonym : assassin, sharpshooter, killer, marksman, markswoman
 - **Premeditated** : (planned, intended)
Synonym : Calculated, conscious, deliberate, intentional, wilful, considered, designed, fixed, purposed
 - **Commensurate** : (adequate, corresponding)
Synonym : comparable, compatible, consistent, proportionate, sufficient, appropriate, equal, fit, fitting
 - **Disproportionate** : (out of balance)
Synonym : excessive, inordinate, superfluous, unequal, unreasonable, irregular
 - **Intervene** : (mediate)
Synonym : arbitrate, intercede, interfere, involve, meddle, negotiate, intermediate, interrupt, intrude
 - **Stake** : (Pole)
Synonym : Pale, bet, wager, share, investment, paling, picket, post, stave
 - **Closure** : (conclusion)
Synonym : closing, stoppage, termination, cease, close, end, ending, finish, stop
 - **Injunction** : (decree)
Synonym : admonition, ban, embargo, instruction, mandate, prohibition, ruling, writ.
 - **Restrained** : (calm, quiet)
Synonym : discreet, laid-back, mild, muted, reasonable, reticent, subdued, tasteful, moderate, steady
 - **Infuse** : (introduce; soak)
Synonym : animate, imbue, impart, impregnate, inculcate, inspire, instil, invest, pervade, saturate, suffuse
 - **Viable** : (reasonable, practicable)
Synonym: applicable, feasible, possible, usable, workable

O n Rights & Wrongs

The Centre should reconsider its draft Bill on transgender rights

It will be a travesty of its avowed objectives if the proposed legislation to protect the rights of transgender persons is not sufficiently rooted in a rights based approach. News that the Centre has brushed aside a parliamentary standing committee's report and plans to introduce the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill without changes is a disappointment. The process of recognising the rights of the community and seeking to protect it by legislation gained momentum in 2014, when the Supreme Court gave a landmark verdict in the NALSA case. The court recognised the community as a third gender entitled to the same rights and constitutional protection as other citizens. It called for an end to discrimination based on gender against those who do not conform to the gender assigned to them at birth. Besides this negative right against discrimination, the court ruled that transgender persons had a positive right to make decisions about themselves, express themselves and participate in community life. It directed the government to accord them 'socially and educationally backward' status so they could benefit from affirmative action. In 2014, a private member's Bill moved by DMK MP Tiruchi N. Siva was passed in the Rajya Sabha. In the Lok Sabha, the government introduced its own Bill, which was referred to the Standing Committee on social Justice and Empowerment.

The Standing committee, in its July 2017 report, suggested some modifications and additions to the draft. In particular, it disagreed with the definition of 'transgender' in the draft Bill and wanted modification to bring it in line with global norms. The Committee felt that the definition violated the principle that transgender persons have a right to self-identification of their gender. Activists and experts have also rightly pointed to the absence of any reference to the implications of criminal and civil laws that are based on the traditional gender binary. While provisions on equality and non-discrimination would promote equal opportunity, in the process the real benefit of reservation in jobs should not be denied. Social legislation should not be merely benevolent; rather, it should be imbued with an approach that extends to the marginalised sections the freedom, dignity and autonomy that other citizens enjoy. In the domain of legislation, disagreements over drafts are natural. It is up to the government of the day to adopt an inclusive approach towards divergent opinions and come up with the best law possible. Ignoring the opinions of experts and parliamentary committees does not help the process. The Centre should revisit its draft and incorporate the inputs of the standing committee and an expert panel that submitted a report in 2014.

WORD LIST

- **Travesty** : a debased likeness or imitation: a travesty of justice.
Synonym : spoof, ridicule, burlesque, exaggeration, force, mockery, perversion, satire, sham
Antonym : Seriousness, Solemnity
- **Avowed** : (acknowledged; declared) : an avowed enemy.
Synonym : sworn, professed, accepted, admitted, affirmed
- **Transgender** : (Denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with their birth sex.)
"a transgender activist and author".

- **Brushed** :
synonym : caress, thick, shove, kiss, scrape, ski, smooth, sweep
- **Verdict** : (Related to law judgement)
synonym : answer, award, conclusion, decision, decree, finding, opinion, ruling
- **Recognised** : (Acknowledged)
synonym : accepted, identified, known, perceived, remembered, sanctioned, allowed
- **Discrimination** : (bias, particularly in taste)
synonym : bigotry, favouritism, hatred, inequity, injustice, intolerance, prejudice, unfairness
- **Accord** : (agreement or mutual understanding, which is often written)
synonym : deal, pact, reconciliation, accordance, concert, concord, conformity, harmony, okay.
- **Global** : (worldwide, all encompassing)
synonym : comprehensive, international, overall, universal, all round.
- **Binary** : (twofold)
synonym : double, binate, dual, twice, paired.
- **Benevolent** = (charitable, kind)
synonym : benign, caring, compassionate, generous, humane, philanthropic
- **Imbued** : (infuse, saturate)
synonym : inculcate, ingrain, instill, leaven, pervade, steep, suffuse.
- **Autonomy** : (independence)
synonym : freedom, self-determination, self-government, self-rule, liberty, sovereignty.
- **Divergent** : (differing)
synonym : atypical, conflicting, contradictory, contrary, different, desperate, dissimilar, various
- **Revisit** : (visit again)
synonym : call, frequent, return, stay, visit often
- **Incorporate** : (include, combine)
synonym : absorb, assimilate, blend, consolidate, cover, embody, fuse, integrate, merge, mix.
- **Expert** : (knowledgeable, proficient)
synonym : adopt, adroit, deft, experienced, skilled, trained

Best Year Ever

As Indian cricket wraps up a spectacularly successful year, key stress tests lie ahead.

The Indian men's cricket team had an exceptional 2017- statistically, its best year ever. Across formats, only the all-conquering Australians of 2003, with 38 wins from 47 games, managed more victories than India's 37 in 53 matches this year. Virat Kohli's side didn't merely consolidate its hold on the No. 1 spot in Tests; it also routinely bullied the opposition in the shorter forms of the game. The lone blip came in the Champions Trophy in England, where India unravelled against a feisty Pakistan. But few will complain when a runner-up finish in a global tournament is the year's biggest failure. That match apart, an inevitability seemed to

accompany India's success: whether it was a Test, a One Day International or a Twenty 20, the team took the field noticeably stronger than its adversary, and calmly, ruthlessly, set about proving it. It is often said that a side fashions itself in its captain's image. There were certainly moments during the year when Indian played with the glowering intensity Kohli is famous for. Ajinky Rahane and Rohit Sharma stepped successfully into the breach when Kohli was absent; and both brought to the job the subtle impress of their personality. Besides, the side has leaders all around the pitch. The few times India was threatened in 2017 – and only Australia during the Tests early in the year did it more than once – it invariably found a hero.

The one discordant note in an otherwise harmonious 12 months was the controversy over Anil Kumble's exit as coach. The episode should have been handled better, but it is encouraging that it did not derail the team. Indeed, the overall system looks robust and fertile – rate plants such as the quick bowling all-rounder (Hardik Pandya) and the left arm wrist spinner (Kuldeep Yadav) don't take root and flourish otherwise. Nor do specialist Test Batsmen such as M. Vijay and Cheteshwar Pujara or pure glove men such as Wriddhiman Saha. The thrust towards empowering bowlers, vital in a country smitten by batsmen, has not weakened. Clearly, the selectors and the team management – both in Kumble's time and now under Ravi Shastri – are on the same page; so is Rahul Dravid, who has played a significant developmental role with the junior and 'A' sides. If there is a sobering thought in these heady times, it is that the New Year will bring stiffer challenges. A lot of 2017 was at home, but 10 tests in 2018 will be played in South Africa, England, and Australia, tours that stress test every fissure and fault line. India will not be afforded too many mistakes. Kohli's men have, however, given the team's fans reason to dream.

WORD LIST

- **Exceptional** : (irregular, excellent, wonderful)
Synonym : extraordinary, notable, noteworthy, odd, phenomenal, rare, remarkable, special, uncommon, unique, unusual.
- **Across** : (traversing a space, side to side)
Synonym : crosswise, athwart, beyond
- **Consolidate** : (combine, make firm)
Synonym : build up, centralize, concentrate, develop, fortify, reinforce, secure, solidify, stabilize, strengthen, unify.
- **Merely** : (slightly, a little)
Synonym : hardly, only, purely, simply, solely, wholly
- **Bully** : (intimidate, push around)
Synonym : bludgeon, browbeat, coerce, harass, oppress, persecute, terrorise, threaten, torment, torture.
- **Lone** : (by oneself; only)
Synonym : lonely, sole, solitary, alone
- **Blip** : (minor shock)
Synonym : glitch, censor, echo, tap, spot
- **Unravel** : (unfold, solve, untangle)
Synonym : decipher, resolve, solve, undo, untangle.
- **Feisty** : (spirited, touchy)

Synonym : bubbly, courageous, excitable, fiery, gritty, gusty, high-strung, lively, scrappy, spunky

- **Global** : (worldwide, all encompassing)
Synonym : comprehensive, international, overall, universal
- **Inevitability** : (Positive, assurance)
Synonym : confidence, trust, belief, faith, firmness, positiveness.
- **Adversary** : (opponent)
Synonym : antagonist, attacker, competitor, enemy, foe, rival bandit, contestant
- **Ruthlessly** : (cruelty, without remorse)
Synonym : ferociously, fiercely, mercilessly, relentlessly, savagely, viciously.
- **Intensity** : (Passion, force)
Synonym : anxiety, concentration, depth, earnestness, emotion, energy, excitement, ferocity, fervour, fury, magnitude, power, severity, strength, tension, vigour.
- **Subtle** : (nice, quiet, delicate, clever, cunning)
Synonym : exquisite, faint, indirect, ingenious, profound, slight, sophisticated, understand.
- **Invariably** : (perpetually)
Synonym : always, constantly, customarily, habitually, regularly, unflinching
- **Harmonious** : (agreeable, corresponding, friendly)
Synonym : amicable, balanced, congenial, coordinated, cordial, peaceful
- **Discordant** : (not in harmony; conflicting)
Synonym : cacophonous, clashing, dissonant, divergent, jarring, strident
- **Controversy** : (debate, dispute)
Synonym : argument, bickering, difference, discussion, fuss, quarrel, squabble, strife, wrangle, wrangling..
- **Derail**: (go off the rails)
Synonym : crash, hinder, thwart, wreck, defect
- **Robust** : (healthy, strong)
Synonym : booming, hearty, hefty, potent, powerful, prosperous, sturdy, tough, vigorous
- **Fertile** : (ready to bear, produce)
Synonym : abundant, arable, fruitful, lush, productive rich.
- **Smitten** : (enamoured)
Synonym : affected, afflicted, infatuated, taken, stricken.
- **Sobering** : (as in 'serious' and 'tone down') (crucial weighty)
Synonym : dangerous, deep, difficult, far-reaching, grievous, important, major, meaningful, severe, significant, tough, urgent.
- **Heady** : (thrilling, intoxicating)
Synonym : exciting, exhilarating, potent, inebriating, overwhelming, powerful, provocative.
- **Stiff** : (hard, inflexible)
Synonym : arthritic, creaky, rigid, solid, stark, tense, thick, tight, wooden.
- **Afford** : (able to have or do)
Synonym : allow, manage, bear, incur, spare, stand, support, sustain

SOME IMPORTANT IDIOM & PHRASES

- Plum job -

Meaning - Desirable position which is well-paid and considered relatively easy.

Example - This looks like a plum job but it has its own bunch of complications.

- Shape up or ship out -

Meaning - This expression is used to warn someone that if they do not improve their ways, they will have to leave their job.

Example - When Tom started neglecting the customers, he was told to shape up or ship out.

- Golden handshake -

Meaning - Big sum of money given to a person when they leave a company or retire.

Example - The management of various PSUs wanted to cut down on the man power. They offered a golden hand shake to many of their aged employees.

- Separate sheep from goats -

Meaning - Examining a group of people and deciding their suitability

Example - Audition test was conducted by the director to separate sheep from goats.

- Waiting in the wings -

Meaning - Waiting for an opportunity to take action, mostly to replace someone else in their job.

Example - The senior manager is going to retire in next 2 months. Two of his juniors who are waiting in the wings will have a fierce competition.

- Bury your head in the sand-

Meaning: To (try to) avoid a particular situation by pretending that it doesn't exist.

Example: "Stop burying your head in the sand. You haven't been happy with him for years, why are you staying together?"

- A storm is brewing-

Meaning: There will be trouble or emotional upset in the near future.

Example: "She decided to go ahead with their wedding, even though all they've been doing lately is arguing. I can sense a storm is brewing."

- Calm before the storm-

Meaning: An unusually quiet period before a period of upheaval (problems, chaos).

Example: "The strange quietness in town made her feel peaceful. Little did she know, it was just the calm before the storm."

- Weather a storm-

Meaning: To survive a dangerous event or effectively deal with a difficult situation.

Example: "Last year, they had some financial difficulties when her husband was fired. Together, they weathered the storm and figured out how to keep going."

- When it rains, it pours-

Meaning: Bad things occur in large numbers; many big things happen all at once.

Example: "First he was made redundant, then his wife got into a car accident. When it rains, it pours."

- Chasing rainbows-

Meaning: Following dreams, trying to do something that can't be achieved.

Example: "His paintings have neither style nor imagination, but he insists on being a professional painter. He's always chasing rainbows."

- Rain or shine-

Meaning: No matter what happens.

Example: "I'll see you at the airport, rain or shine."

- Under the sun-

Meaning: In existence.

Example: "Gili Trawangan must be one of the most beautiful islands under the sun."

- Once in a blue moon-

Meaning: Very rarely.

Example: "He used to call his grandma once in a blue moon. Now that she has passed away, he regrets not making more of an effort to keep in touch."

- Every cloud has a silver lining-

Meaning: There's a good aspect to every bad situation.

Example: "Don't worry about losing your job. It will be okay. Every cloud has a silver lining!"

- A rising tide lifts all boats-

Meaning: When an economy is performing well, all of the people involved will benefit from it.

Example: "When the economy showed the first signs of recovering, everyone started investing and spending more. A rising tide lifts all boats."

- Get into deep water-

Meaning: To be in trouble.

Example: "He got into deep water when he borrowed a lot of money from a loan shark."

- Pour oil on troubled waters-

Meaning: To try to make people feel better and become friendly again after an argument.

Example: "She hated seeing her two best friends arguing, so she got them together and poured oil on troubled waters."

- Make waves-

Meaning: To cause trouble, to change things in a dramatic way.

This expression comes from the calming effect that oil has on waves as it spreads over the surface of the sea. With the ecological disasters following big oil spillage in recent years, some people might now think of this phrase rather differently compared to its original meaning—but it's still interesting to know about.

Example: "She likes to make waves with her creative marketing campaigns. They get a lot of attention from customers."

- Go with the flow-

Meaning: To relax and go along with whatever is happening.

Example: "Quite often in life, good things happen when you don't make plans. Just go with the flow and see what happens!"

“YOUR MIND IS A POWERFUL THING. WHEN YOU FILL IT WITH POSITIVE THOUGHTS, YOUR LIFE WILL START TO CHANGE.”