

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**.

Words

Gauge

Kind

Meaning

barometer, benchmark, criterion, indicator, meter, pattern, yardstick,

Irony	humor, paradox, satire, twist, wit, banter, contempt Track apprehend, capture, catch, chase, be hot on the trail, cover, dig up, discover, expose, go after, put together.
Demonstration	expression, manifestation, presentation, show, test, testimony, trial, affirmation, confirmation
Cast	casting, ejection, expulsion, fling, flinging, heaving
Intent	decided, preoccupied, resolved, alert, attending, bent, bound
Compensate	comparable, compatible, consistent, proportionate, sufficient, appropriate, equal, fit, fitting
Alienation	disaffection, estrangement, indifference, separation, breach, remoteness
Snuffed out	blow away, bump off, chill, dispatch, dust, grease, murder, waste, whack
Accusation	allegation, complaint, denunciation, impeachment, indictment, recrimination
Sniper	assassin, sharpshooter, killer, marksman, markswoman
Premeditated	Calculated, conscious, deliberate, intentional, wilful, considered, designed, fixed, purposed
Commensuare	comparable, compatible, consistent, proportionate, sufficient, appropriate, equal, fit, fitting
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Disproportionate	excessive, inordinate, superfluous, unequal, unreasonable, irregular
Intervene	arbitrate, intercede, interfere, involve, meddle
Stake	Pale, bet, wager, share, investment, paling, picket
Closure	closing, stoppage, termination, cease, close
Injunction	admonition, ban, embargo, instruction, mandate
Restrained	discreet, laid-back, mild, muted, reasonable, reticent
Infuse	animate, imbue, impart, impregnate, inculcate
Viable	applicable, feasible, possible, usable, workable

on 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.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Travesty		spoof, ridicule, burlesque, exaggeration, force,
Avowed		barbarity, horror, cruelty, offensiveness, enormity, wickedness
Brushed		caress, thick, shove, kiss, scrape, ski, smooth, sweep
Verdict		answer, award, conclusion, decision, decree, finding, opinion, ruling
Recognised		accepted, identified, known, perceived, remembered

Discrimination	bigotry, favouritism, hatred, inequity, injustice
Accord	deal, pact, reconciliation, accordance
Global	comprehensive, international, overall, universal, all round
Binary	double, binate, dual, twice, paired.
Benevolent philanthropic	benign, caring, compassionate, generous, humane,
Imbued	inculcate, ingrain, instill, leaven, pervade, steep, suffuse
Autonomy	freedom, self-determination, self-government, self-rule, liberty, sovereignty
Divergent	atypical, conflicting, contradictory, contrary, different, desperate, dissimilar
Revisit	call, frequent, return, stay, visit often
Incorporate	absorb, assimilate, blend, consolidate, cover, embody, fuse, integrate, merge, mix.
Expert	adopt, adroit, deft, experienced, skilled, trained