

# SP castigated for action against anti-Sterlite activists

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THE Madurai Bench of Madras High Court criticised Thoothukudi police for initiating criminal action against persons involved in anti-Sterlite activities, saying that the police department is taking sides.

Hearing a PIL, alleging illegal detention and threatening persons involved in anti-Sterlite activities in Thoothukudi, a bench comprising KK Sasidharan and PD Audikesavalu said police should be fair.

They lashed out at Thoothukudi Superintendent of Police Murali Ramha, who was present before the Court pursuant to a summons issued to him, by asking, "If somebody is mustering support against the industry, is it an offence?"

They also questioned the police if they took similar ac-

tion against pro-Sterlite campaigners and criticised them for the unfair treatment.

The Judges directed the SP to file an affidavit with copies of FIRs registered in connection with the issue along with details of their current status, on or before the next hearing on February 14.

The litigation was filed by S Mohan, Joint Director of People's Watch, stating that several persons involved in anti-Sterlite activities including those who are members of WhatsApp groups formed against the industry, are being threatened by the police.

One of the witnesses to the police firing that took place during the anti-Sterlite protest in Thoothukudi, Santhosh Raj was arrested and illegally detained without following due procedures, he stated, and had prayed the Court for a direction against the same.

