

Thoothukudi firing was police strategy to break protest: Activists

Say senior ministers could have talked to protesters to ease tension



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

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Express News Service

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

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

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

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

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

V Suresh of the People’s Union for Civil Liberties said the move by police was to break the protest for a cause to which the people remained committed. “The whole issue has been happening for a long time. It is not like the jallikattu protest. This is a classic police strategy. They have used multiple strategies. First is to discredit the entire movement and to shift the entire issue from Sterlite to police firing,” said Suresh.

Henri Tiphagne of People’s Watch, an NGO, has demanded a joint suo moto enquiry by the NHRC and the SHRC on the entire duration of the Sterlite protest and the brutal use of police force at the protest.

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

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

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

Minister doubts ulterior motive behind protest

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

Film directors stage protest in Chennai

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

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