

Kodai Mercury Dump 'Burns' in UK

Saleh Mamon, who attends Unilever shareholders meet as proxy in Surrey, raises queries on abandoned plant

Express News Service

Chennai: They are far and few. But the voices seeking justice in Kodaikanal, where the Anglo-Dutch MNC Unilever is accused of dumping mercury at its erstwhile thermometer plant, have reached closer home for the transnational giant.

When the Unilever shareholders met on April 30 at Leatherhead in Surrey, the UK, Saleh Mamon, a retired headmaster, whose grandfather hailed from Gujarat, stood up to question the company over the alleged contradiction between Unilever's stated policies and practice with regard to the Kodaikanal issue.

Mamon attended the meeting as a proxy after learning about the issue at Kodaikanal, where a thermometer factory that was set up by Ponds, later acquired by Unilever, had severely polluted the soil and groundwater with mercury, considered to be the third-most dangerous element after arsenic and lead.

In his annual report to shareholders, Unilever CEO Paul Polman stressed on 'Unilever Sustainable Living Plan' that has three goals — improving health and well being, reducing environmental impact and enhancing livelihoods.

"But the question that arises is why has it not resolved



File picture of the entrance of the abandoned thermometer factory of Hindustan Unilever Limited in Kodaikanal | EXPRESS

the problems at Kodaikanal, which have harmed and are continuing to harm the environment and poisoned people with grave health consequences, including children born to ex-workers. For me, Kodaikanal were not to be treated as legal issue only, but more importantly a moral issue and of social justice. I said so at the meeting," Mamon said in his e-mail to *The New Indian Express*.

Mamon had raised questions, including the need for an independent assessment of the extent of contamination; the need for a monitoring mechanism on the spread of contamination, particularly to the ecosystem of Pambar forest; the correctness of adopting a much lower standard for clean up when compared to the UK or the Dutch standards; the need for a thorough, independent epidemiological

study to assess the mercury poisoning of former workers and an interim framework of medical care and living allowance for them.

But the reply, he noted, was too general in nature. "He appreciated the concerns. He felt that the newspaper reports were biased... (He said) there were many obstacles in the way including NGOs and also people who had never been to that place," Mamon said.

There were shareholders of Indian origin present during the meeting, but not one asked a follow-up question. "I think the shareholders have very little knowledge of these issues because in the UK, the corporate media rarely cover issues such as Kodaikanal," he added.

This non-chalance does not surprise veteran campaigners. "Most shareholders don't make investment

RISE & FALL

■ Plant set up in 1983 by Chesebrough-Ponds, bought over by Unilever in 1986. Machinery came from the US

■ The factory produced around 75,000 thermometers a day

■ Directed to shut down in 2001 after Palani Hills Conservation Council and Greenpeace exposed the company's attempt to sell glass contaminated with mercury to a scrap dealer

■ In 2003, 300 tonnes contaminated waste extracted. 280 tonnes partially-treated mercury sludge sent back to the US

■ Company reportedly admitted that over 3.5 tonnes of mercury remained spread all over its site

■ Standard for clean up in UK: 1 mg/kg of soil; Netherlands: 10 mg/kg. At Kodaikanal, it was set at 25mg/kg

decisions on ethical grounds, they want to see a return on their investment," noted professor Eurig Scandrett of the Queen Margaret University, the UK, who has been actively part of the campaign for justice at Bhopal.

However, he hastened to add that efforts like those of Mamon will come of use. "When shareholders realise that Unilever is neglecting its international responsibilities, they'll see it as a financial risk and put their money elsewhere. Unilever's CEO will be more concerned about the threat of shareholders abandoning the company than the health of Indian workers. That is why shareholder action is important," he explained.

In many ways, the professor added, Unilever is the same as Dow Chemicals and many other corporations

who trumpet their social responsibility, but refuse to be accountable for the damage they cause to their workers and neighbours.

"If Unilever is so confident that it has done everything required to mitigate pollution, then it should back an independent assessment of the contamination and the health impact on its former workers, and commit to carrying out its recommendations," said Scandrett.

City-based environment activist Nithyanand Jayaraman said such efforts by their loosely-organised collective called UK Campaign for Justice in Kodaikanal were aimed at spreading awareness about the issue, especially among the young population. "We are expecting the company to assume responsibility for its actions," he said.

'Minor Issues at Airport Being Fixed'

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The compromise is that AAI has assured police that they would send their own staff to maintain security cover and usher traffic along the lane. Two police kiosks have been erected at either end for effective monitoring as well. Signage indicating that the road is open is yet to go up, but that will happen in the next few days, said Shastri.

MoS for Civil Aviation Mahesh Sharma, who was transiting through Chennai en route to Puducherry, told the media that all the "minor issues at the airport" were being fixed and funds for the same are being released. He also assured that the privatisation process would not mean that the control or ownership of the airport would be handed over to the private player, as AAI would still be overseeing the running of the airport.

Previously, there had been several complaints about not being allowed to use the lane.

Aavin not Buying from Ryots: PMK

Express News Service

Chennai: PMK founder S Ramadoss has accused State-owned Aavin (Tamil Nadu Co-operative Milk Producers' Federation Ltd) of refusing to procure milk from traditional dairy farmers and

increased. Even when it reduced the quantum of purchase from co-operative societies in Salem, Krishnagiri and Tirunelveli among other places, Aavin has been making bulk purchase from private milk producers registered as associate members of the societies, he charged. "The milk not procured by Aavin is sold at very low prices to local traders. The same milk is sold to Aavin with higher profit disguising as bulk producers," he added.

Flaying Aavin's stand that the quality of milk was not satisfactory as maligning traditional milk farmers, Ramadoss said the former must change its attitude and procure wholly from traditional milk producers. "It should be ensured that both Aavin and traditional milk producers are mutually benefited," he said, adding that the best economics at this juncture would be to increase the procurement and produce value-added products

Love, Sex and Crime, All After Wrong Phone Call

Express News Service

Villupuram: A 29-year-old farmer was arrested for cheating his illicit lover and threatening her after having a physical relationship with her near Kallakuruchi on Sunday. Police are also in search of four of his friends, who harassed the woman to satisfy them sexually.

Sources said, V Sathyamoorthy (29) of Thandalai village near Kallakuruchi, the farmer, already married and having a child, had a few months ago got a wrong call and accidentally got introduced to Kumari (19) (name changed) of Uchimedu village near Thiyagadurugam, whose husband was working in the Gulf. Since then, the farmer and the woman spoke regularly to each other. Sathyamoorthy said he was not yet married and would like to marry her.

Sathyamoorthy's wife was unaware of this relationship. On Wednesday, he called Kumari and asked her to come to North Kattukottai,

his native village. When Kumari arrived, he took her to the nearby forest area, where he forcibly had a physical relationship with her.

Following this, Kumari asked him to marry her, but Sathyamoorthy refused to and revealed he was already married. Also, he threatened to murder her if she disclosed their relationship to anyone. Kumari was shocked and went back to her home.

Meanwhile, Sathyamoorthy narrated the incident to his friends M Narayanan, A Ramu, K Gopal and N Muthusamy. They too called up Kumari and asked her to have sex with them for money.

On Saturday evening, Kumari lodged a complaint at the Kallakuruchi All-Woman police station. Based on that, police registered a case and after inquiry arrested Sathyamoorthy. Police are also in search of his friends, who were absconding since Saturday after coming to know that a case has been filed against them too.

Govt-built Houses turn Death Traps as Residents' Complaints Fall on Deaf Ears

by Bagalavan Porier

Villupuram: Residents of Ekkiyarkuppam village near Marakkanam fear entering their houses these days and it's not because of fear of natural disasters like earthquake, but the poor quality of the government-built structures. Their fear is not without reason as two houses have reportedly crumbled recently.

According to sources, majority of the 600 families living in Ekkiyarkuppam are fisherfolk. In 1991, the government constructed 249 houses for them and later, between 2002 and 2003, an additional 236 houses were built and allotted. However, cracks started developing in the first lot of houses by 2000. As the cracks were getting bigger and starting to pose a threat to the structure, the villagers urged the district administration to repair the houses. But, no action was initiated, the villagers al-

Action, Please!

No Dustbins at Madambakkam

Madambakkam can be called the dumpyard of the city as the locality does not even have a single public dustbin, forcing the residents to dump the rubbish on the road, which attracts stray animals foraging for food.

Prit Pal Singh, Madambakkam

Cold Storage Unit at CMBT Unused

The cold storage facility at Koyambedu market is awaiting installation of solar power panels as a huge bill is generated from consumption of electricity. Hope the authorities make the necessary arrangements.

S Jayachandran, Vadapalani

Stray Dog Menace on Beach

Stray dog menace on the Besant Nagar beach goes unchecked, causing trouble to visitors. The Corporation should take action. Besides, the civic body can install lights on the road along the beach for enhanced safety.

S Venugopalan, Vannandurai

CCTV Cameras Sought at MRTS Station

Several MRTS railway stations need CCTV cameras for safety, especially for women during night. With the increase in crime at the stations, the chances of tracing the culprit and taking action against him are poor, for want of the cameras. I urge authorities to install cameras at the station as well as in the train compartments.

N Raghuraman, Kodambakkam

No Ventilation in Lavatories

The stainless steel toilets on Ebrahimi Sahib Street are so small that big-made people cannot use them comfortably. Moreover, the toilets do not have ventilation. An exhaust fan in the facility could be installed.

K Govindarajan, Broadway

Upgrade Ullagaram Village Library

The village-level library at Ullagaram, Madipakkam, needs to be upgraded with the latest books in English. The library fails to cater to the needs of the students, as only Tamil books are available.

A K Nazimudeen, Madipakkam

Toll-free SMS for TNEB Complaints Sought

The telephone lines of TNEB complaint service (no:1912) are always engaged and complaints of blackout, low voltage, burning underground cables, faulty meters could be made easily if only SMS facility is introduced.

V Ganapathy Subramanian, Royapuram

Shelter sought at Vanuvampet Bus stop

Vanuvampet MTC bus-stop adjacent to Veerangal Odai Bridge does not have a roof and commuters are exposed to the elements. Repeated pleas have been in vain. MTC can also introduce new routes from Keelkatalai via Vanuvampet to CMBT, Anna Square and Sriperumbudur.

Ragav, Chennai

Cover Open Drains at Ullagaram

Open drains on Ullagaram Ambedkar Street near Macmillan Colony (Zone 14) are ideal for breeding of mosquitoes and need to be sealed soon. Also, there is the stray dog menace on the stretch.

Anand, Chennai

Apathy of Civic Body Deplored

Cleanliness is next to Godliness, but no one bothers. And there's no to stop people from spitting and relieving themselves near the gate of my house. Whom should I blame? Them? Or staff of the city civic body?

P V Suresh Babu, Triplicane



SEND PIX



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WRITE TO US

Write to us at actionline@newindianexpress.com or send your snail mails to The New Indian Express, Express Gardens, 29, Second Main Road, Ambattur Industrial Estate, Chennai - 600058

INDIAN OVERSEAS BANK
NESAPPAKKAM BRANCH: 778, S K Apartments, Munuswamy Salai, West KK Nagar, Chennai- 600078 Ph: 044 - 2366 4523

POSSESSION NOTICE

Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorized officer of the Indian Overseas Bank, Nesapakkam Branch under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (second) Act 2002 (NO.3 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated 06.02.2015 and calling upon the borrower/guarantor(s) Mrs.P.Latha (W/o E.Purushothaman, No.109/38, East Vanniar Street, K K Nagar (West) Chennai-600078 and Mr.E.Purushothaman H/o Mrs.P.Latha (Guarantor) to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs.3,54,405/- (Rupees Three Lakhs Fifty Four Thousand Four Hundred Five Only) with further interest applicable at contractual rate with penal interest from 27.09.2011 there on within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrower / Guarantor(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on this 28th day of April 2015.

The Borrower / Guarantor(s) in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Indian Overseas Bank for an amount of Rs.3,54,405/- (Rupees Three Lakhs Fifty Four Thousand Four Hundred Five Only) and further interest from 27.09.2011 there on and for any other such sums and costs which the borrowers owes to the bank.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

Flat No.C, 1st floor, measuring an extent of 862 sq.ft. comprised with 1/4th UDS of the land in 7893 Sq.ft in Block No.64/3, along with S.No.384/1, situated in R.K.Shanmugam Salai, Kodambakkam Village, K K Nagar, Chennai-600 078. Bounded on the: North by: MIG Block No.63, South by: MIG Flat No.62 D, East by: Plot No.52 & 53 West by: R K Shanmugam Salai -80 Feet Road.

Date : 28.04.2015
Place : Chennai
Authorised Officer
Indian Overseas Bank

SOUTH INDIAN BANK
Regd. Office: SIB House, T.B. Road, Mission Quarters, Thiruvananthapuram - 680 001 Tel: +91-487-2420020 Fax: +91-487-2442021 Email: sibcorp@sib.co.in CIN: L65191KL1929PLC001017

Regional Office: Niagra Apartments, No.1, Sterling Road, Nungambakkam, Chennai -600034 Tel. No: +91 - 44 28278542 / 28238250/ 28281109 Fax: +91 - 44 - 28232014

POSSESSION NOTICE (See rule 8 (1))

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised officer of The South Indian Bank Ltd. under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued demand notice dated 11.12.2014 u/s 13(2) of the Act calling upon the borrower (1) M/S S.R.Fabricators Private Limited, Plot No.B-25 (A), SIPCOT Industrial Estate Complex, Gummidipoondi, Chennai - 601201, and Guarantors (2) M/s Shriram Auto Finance, Represented by partner, Mr.Vikram Mankal, No.4, Lady Desika Road, Mylapore, Chennai - 600 004, (3) M/s Shriram Auto Finance, Represented by partner Mrs.Vidya Narayanamurthi, No.4, Lady Desika Road, Mylapore, Chennai - 600 004 and (4) Mr.Vikram Mankal, Flat No.AF1, Pallava Heights, 1st Floor, No.54, Luz Avenue, Mylapore, Chennai - 600 004, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs.13,77,36,312.18 (Rupees Thirteen Crores Seventy Seven Lakhs Thirty Six Thousand Three Hundred Twelve and Paise Eighteen Only) with further interest and costs within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13 (4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rule on this 28th day of April 2015.

The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of The South Indian Bank Ltd. for an amount of Rs.13,74,50,867.19 (Rupees Thirteen Crores Seventy Four Lakhs Fifty Thousand Eight Hundred Sixty Seven and Paise Nineteen only) as on 27.04.2015 and interest and costs thereon.

DESCRIPTION OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

Leasehold right in all that piece and parcel of Industrial land admeasuring 2.20 Acres or thereabouts along with buildings admeasuring approximately 60809.84 Sq. Ft. or any other construction thereon in Plot No.B-25/A in the SIPCOT's Industrial Complex at Gummidipoondi, under Survey Nos.354/1B, 2C Part, 2D Part of Pappankuppam Village, Gummidipoondi Taluk, Tiruvallur Revenue District, Gummidipoondi Sub Registration District, more fully described in Lease Deed No.4800/2010 dated 02.12.2010 and Modified Lease Deed No.959/11 dated 07.03.2011 of SRO Gummidipoondi and bounded: on the North by: Plot No.B25/B; on the South by: 12.00 Mts. Wide Road; on the East by: 18.00 Mts. Wide Road; on the West by: SF No.354/2B. Linear measurements: East to West on the North: 120 M; East to West on the South: 114 M; North to South on the East: 76 M; North to South on the West: 76 M.

Date : 28.04.2015
Place: Chennai
Authorised Officer
The South Indian Bank Ltd



A dilapidated house at Ekkiyarkuppam near Marakkanam; and (R) a resident points out to the crumbling roof of his house | EXPRESS

leged. Meanwhile, 13 houses from the first lot collapsed in the last three years creating more dread among the residents.

Recently, the roof of the house belonging to a resident called S Anajalai collapsed due to rain. As she was sleeping outside, she escaped unhurt. A few days later, another house belonging to L Rajam was completely razed due to heavy rain. It was a narrow escape for her as well.

People whose houses witnessed the most damage had built huts near the houses. Others had covered the concrete roof with plastic sheets to protect it from rain. Madurai, a fisherman, told *Express* that immediately after the 2004 tsunami, as houses were being allotted to people from a nearby village, they had requested officials to either repair their houses or allot new houses. The officials, he alleged, never paid at-

Singapore a Favourite for Indian Bizmen

Continued from Page 1

Singapore witnessed huge and steady investments by Indians. Since 2012-13, \$4,818 million (₹30,703 crore) has been invested by Indians in Singapore.

Netherlands appears to be another favourite of the Indian biz community. While \$1,050.67 million (₹6,691 crore) was invested in 2012-13, a whopping \$1,778.33 million (₹11,330 crore) capital investment was made in 2013-14. In the current fiscal, \$723.32 million (₹4,607 crore) investment has already been made.

Another surprise destination for huge capital investment is the Bahamas, where \$54.67 million was invested in 2012-13 followed by \$17.1 million in 2013-14 and \$32.76 million in 2014-15. Southeast African country Mozambique, which in 2012 discovered large natural gas reserves, witnessed a sudden investment of \$2,643 million (₹16, 842 crore) in 2013-14. In 2012-13, the total investment was only \$0.47 million. After a spurt in investment in 2013-14, there was sharp decline in the current fiscal: only \$3.68 million.

British Virgin Islands, which earns its 60 per cent revenue by registration of covert entities, has nothing substantial to offer to the Richie Rich looking to invest. With an export revenue of an average \$40 million and imports worth \$400 million, the country has tourism as the main business besides providing mailbox companies to shadowy operators.

The finance ministry said that on March 5, 2013, resident individuals were permitted to undertake Overseas Direct Investment (ODI) in the equity of overseas joint ventures/wholly owned subsidiaries under the automatic route within the overall ceiling under Liberalized Remittance Scheme (LRS) subject to the compliance with certain conditions. The ceiling was increased from \$75,000 to \$125,000 per financial year per head for any permitted capital or current account transaction or a combination of both through a notification on June 3, 2014.

In June-July 2014, The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists revealed a list of covert firms using complex offshore structures in the British Virgin Islands and other offshore hideaways famous for providing shelters to money-launderers. It disclosed names of 665 Indian businessmen and entities registered in these tax havens. The leak raised suspicions on investment in a country with a labour force of just 12,000 people.