

# Activist's murder: Panel seeks action against Karur administration, cops

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Madurai:** A fact-finding team of HRDA (Human Rights Defenders Alert) Tamil Nadu has sought action against bureaucrats of Karur district administration for their alleged complacency which resulted in the murder of land and environmental rights activist Jaganathan at his native Kalipalayam in Kuppam panchayat on September 10. The team also called for a DVAC probe into the illegal quarrying in Karur.

P Jaganathan, 50, was mowed down by a mini-truck while he was riding a two-wheeler. Three people including Annai blue metals and quarry owner Selvakumar were arrested in this connection. The deceased has been campaigning against the qu-

**P Jaganathan, 50, was mowed down by a mini-truck while he was riding a two-wheeler. He has been campaigning against the quarry for destroying agriculture**

arry for destroying agriculture in the locality. The fact-finding committee consisting of MLA Abdul Samad, national president of Swaraj-India Christina Samy, advocates John Vincent and Balamurugan from PUCL, advocate Kennedy from Tamil National People's Front, R R Srinivasan from Poovulagin Nanbargal, I Aseer from HRDA, social activist Sekar Annadurai and Mohan from People's Watch

went to Kuppam to study the incidents leading to the murder.

Christina Samy told reporters that the quarry, now under the ownership of Selvakumar's wife Karthika, was functioning without permission since 2015. Jaganathan had filed a petition in the grama sabha meeting on August 15 demanding action against it. He submitted another petition to the district environmental engineer and got the quarry and blue metal crusher sealed on September 8.

There was a clear threat to his life, as pointed out by Jaganathan's friend Shanmugam who said the victim was scared and planned to seek protection from the district administration on September 10. But he was mowed down by a

vehicle owned by the blue metal company later in the evening. The police were trying to register an accident case but the timely intervention of Shanmugam and others forced the police to register a murder case, she said. Jaganathan was earlier attacked by Selvakumar in May 2019.

Christina Samy sought Rs 50 lakh compensation for the bereaved family, part of which should be realised from the salaries of officials who failed to act against illegal quarries. The team also sought an expert study involving IIT-M, Anna University, MS University and TNAU to assess the environmental damage due to quarrying in Karur district. Jaganathan's mother Valliammal and sister Kaliasammal were also present for the press briefing.