

# Units flouting norms, says forum

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Cuddalore:** Several units in the SIPCOT Industrial Estate here are operating without valid licences flouting all norms and polluting the environment, a forum of environment protection organisations has charged. The organisations came together under 'SIPCOT Area Community Environmental Monitoring' (SACEM).

A survey, "Ground truths II: Status of Hazardous Wastes and Pollution in Cuddalore SIPCOT Chemical Estate" released on December 30 by SACEM claimed that at least eight of the units in the SIPCOT estate didn't have a valid

'Consent to Establish' while 22 operated without a valid licence under Air and Water Acts. Further, 17 units didn't have valid authorization under the Hazardous Waste Rules and five of seven units that require Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearance from the ministry of environment and forests didn't have it. "Violations of licence and authorisation regulations are prosecutable under the Air and Water Acts requiring stringent civil and criminal reparations. No unit can lawfully function without these permissions. Till date, no prosecution proceedings have been initiated against any of the manage-

ments of the industries and district officials," said the report.

The survey is a follow-up of the forum's earlier investigations presented to the Supreme Court Monitoring Committee on Hazardous Waste in 2005. The survey charged that "in most instances, the violators were not first-time offenders, but frequent law-breakers."

District collector Rajendra Ratnoo told The Times of India that there were no specific complaints about the industries. "If there any specific complaints against industries with complete information, the administration will take necessary action," he said.