

Pollution watchdog paints Sundargarh black

Sponge iron units main villains and OSPCB found wanting, says CSE report

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CENTRE for Science and Environment (CSE) today released its findings on environmental pollution caused by mushrooming sponge iron units in Sundargarh district. The CSE is a public interest research and advocacy organisation based in New Delhi. It researches into, lobbies for and communicates the urgency of development that is both sustainable and equitable.

The study also found environmental degradation in 13 other sponge iron clusters across West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.

The report released by CSE deputy director general Chandra Bhusan said two clusters -Kuanmunda and Bonai - in Sundargarh district were

taken up for study and it was found that the Orissa State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB) was grossly wanting in action and enforcement of pollution prevention norms.

Notwithstanding OSPCB's periodical issuance of show-cause notices and punitive actions, the study said majority of the sponge iron units in Orissa do not comply to norms and several units were found violating guidelines repeatedly. It said 15 per cent of the pollution intensive units run without effective pollution control equipment. In Orissa, 37 per cent of the day in-

spection reports showed abnormally high emissions from kilns and the night inspection reports put the emission rate at cent per cent, the report said. The study warned of dire environmental consequences in future in the absence of proper monitoring from the OSPCB and raised concerns over the disposal of solid waste. Majority of sponge iron units in Orissa



do not have proper solid waste disposal mechanism leading to air and water pollution.

As the sponge iron sector is set to grow seven times amid growing de-

mand, Bhusan said, "Our pollution control boards are weak and enforcement actions too feeble to enforce compliance." He suggested to give more teeth to the pollution control boards.

The report stressed phasing out of kilns with less the 200 tonnes per day (TPD) capacity, enactment of mandatory standards for material handling, storage and transportation, new cluster based standards and stricter enforcement tools and civil administrative mechanism to impose heavy penalties.

Following the release of the CSE report, a workshop educated green activists from four states to work as pressure groups. Birmitrapur MLA George Tirkey and research associate of CSE, Sugandh Juneja, were present.

Gangster Hyder's son among 6 held

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drapara college," said SP Narasingh Bhol.

POLICE today arrested six criminals, including a juvenile college student and son of dreaded gangster Sk. Hyder, in a crackdown in the district. Two 'bhujalis', two motorcycles and three mobile phones were seized from their possession.

"The criminals have been identified as Krupasindhu alias Pintu Behera, Rabin-dra Barik, Sk. Azariuddin, son of Hyder, Sk. Abdula Sabir and Suraj Kumar alias Kulu De apart from the juvenile student of Ken-

They were involved in many crimes in the district and its adjoining areas. They recently paid money to a gangster of Kendrapara to procure firearms from a Bhubaneswar-based gun-runner, police said.

They were produced in the court of JMFC which rejected their bail applications and remanded them in judicial custody.

Police suspect that all the arrested are members of Hyder gang. Hyder has been languishing in the jail for five years now.