

May 29, 2008

Bhopal Survivors Happy With Prime Minister's Response and determined to continue with protest

**Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Stationary Karamchari Sangh
Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Purush Sangarsh Morcha
Bhopal Group for Information and Action**

Press Statement, May 29th, 2008

Three organizations of the survivors of the 1984 Bhopal disaster leading a protracted battle for rehabilitation and justice today expressed satisfaction at the response of the Prime Minister. Today morning Shri Prithviraj Chavan, Minister of State in the PMO visited the pavement spot at Jantar Mantar where the Bhopal survivors have been protesting for last two months and read out a two page statement authorized by the Prime Minister.

The organizations: Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Stationery Karmchari Sangh, Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Purush Sangharsh Morcha and Bhopal Group for Information and Action who had earlier led a 37-day 800 kilometer long Padyatra have decided to continue with their protest as the Prime Minister is yet to respond to most of the demands concerning legal action against Union Carbide and its current owner Dow Chemical Company, USA.

Mr. Chavan assured the protestors that the PMO is active in finalizing an official response to demands of extradition of absconding Union Carbide's representative, cancellation of registration of Dursban and two other pesticides of Dow Chemical and revoking the permission given to Reliance Industries for purchase of Union Carbide's UNIPOL technology.

The Bhopal protestors thanked the Prime Minister for the "principled agreement" on the first demand of the 2008 Bhopal-New Delhi Padyatra that of setting up of an Empowered Commission on Bhopal. They will be sending a letter to the Prime Minister with the final draft of the Commission on Bhopal Bill to be passed in the Monsoon session of the Parliament. The proposed Commission will have survivors' representatives and will function at least for the next 30 years.

The Bhopal organizations are also happy that the Prime Minister has asked the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to continue medical research by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). The Prime Minister's promise that the communities with contaminated ground water will receive piped water by the end of 2008 remains to convince the Bhopal organizations because the money for this JNURM project was sanctioned in April 2006 and only 30% of the work has been done

so far.

The Bhopal organizations are particularly happy that the Prime Minister has affirmed his government's support on the issue of Dow Chemical's liabilities for the toxic waste and ground water contamination in and around Union Carbide's abandoned factory. They hope that the government will summon the political will to take appropriate legal action against Union Carbide and Dow Chemical for their crimes in India.

Bhopal organizations extended their thanks to the Members of Parliament Shri D Raja of CPI, Shri Abony Roy of RSP, former MP and senior columnist Kuldip Nayyar, Supreme lawyer Prashant Bhushan, Magasaysay awardee Shri Arvind Khejriwal and all their national and International supporters for their unstinted support to the Bhopal Struggle.

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