

The strike will continue till the plant goes | By Yentha.com

Trivandrum: Vilappilsala's residents' Satyagraha to shut down the waste treatment plant reached the 100th day today. C R Neelakandan noted environmental activist inaugurated the 100th day milestone meeting. Rene Ayline, National Coordinator, National Confederation of Human Rights Organisations and Gro Vasu, civil rights activist graced the occasion.

CR Neelakantan told the gathering, "the urban city crowd shouldn't dump waste on others and the solution is treating waste at home. People's basic needs have to be addressed first." He also cited that sanitary land filling isn't practical for Kerala as it causes environmental problems.

The leakage of leachate from the plant has been a cause of concern for the residents of Vilappilsala. The offensive odour could be sensed from kilometres afar. "This factory has been running without the Panchayat's license and causing health problems for the residents. Vilappilsala is now reduced to a dumping yard. We will continue the strike until the factory is shut down," said Burhan, President of the Vilappilsala Janakeeya Vikasana Samithi.

"There is no compromise now. The plant must go. They told us that they wanted the land for setting up gardens and we were tricked into this and filed cases against us when we started our protest but we won't stop. Most of us boycotted this election and didn't vote as we have lost faith in the Govt. and our strike will continue," echoed Vijayasree who is having trouble to marry off her daughter because of the plant.

"Political parties and the Corporation have vested interests. It's the monetary gain that they are turning a blind eye to this issue," added Gro Vasu and called for the continuation of the strike.

Many rendered their support for the strike disregarding the heavy downpour. "In our attempt to convert the city into a "green city, clean city," Vilappilsala is converted into a dump yard. This can't be justified," said Rene Ayline. The residents narrated their share of problems. "We have been living with the problems for 10 years and this has led to many diseases. It has polluted the air and the Meenampalli Thodu, our source for domestic chores. But now the water is polluted and so is the Karamana River. It's our right to breathe fresh air and live in dignity" adds an exasperated resident, Jaya Santhosh.

Residents against whom criminal cases were filed for protesting against the factory and those who were imprisoned were honoured at the meeting.

