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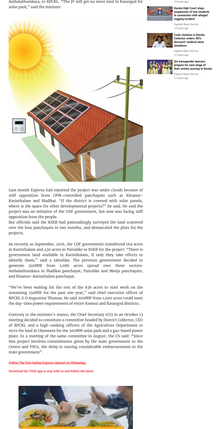
Protests drown ambitious solar plans in Kasargod

Plan to set up biggest ambitious energy plans, the government - under pressure from CPM-ruled panchayats — has scaled down the solar project in Kasargod to 1,000 from the targeted 20,000. "No new land will be made available for the project," Reverse Mission S Chandrasekhran told the Kerala High Court. "We will explore rooftop embankments" for the state government, as the "project involves considerable grees to the German government," according to top officials.

Reverse Mission S Chandrasekhran is Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (KINFRA) chairman and managing director. Energy Corporation of India Limited (SECI) — started presenting LOIT from the first pack at Ambalathanadu in Mallikal panchayat last month. On Thursday, the cabinet decided to transfer 1,000 acres, the site of the pack at Ambalathanadu, to KPCSL. "The IV will get no more land in Kasargod for solar parks," said the minister.



Last month Express had reported the project was under clouds because of stiff opposition from CPM-controlled panchayats such as Kinanur-Karindalam and Mallikal. Of the district is covered with solar panels, the rest of the land is under paddy cultivation. Sources said the idea of the project was an initiative of the CSR government, but now was facing stiff opposition from the people.

But officials said the KINFRA had probably surveyed the land scattered over the four panchayats in two months, and demarcated the plots for the projects.

As recently as September, 2018, the LDF government transferred 20 acres in Karimbadam and 40 acres in Pattadiyar to KSEB for the project. "There is government land available in Karimbadam, if only they take efforts to acquire it," said a KINFRA official. "The Kinanur-Karindalam panchayat is generate 20MW from 1,000 acres spread over, then vertical, Ambalathanadu in Mallikal panchayat, Pattadiyar and Meeja panchayats, and Kinanur-Karindalam panchayat.

"We've been waiting for the rest of the 20 acres to start work on the remaining 1,000MW for the past one year," said Ahmed Kutty Kunhi of KPCSL E-O Supreme Thomas. He said 200MW from 1,000 acres could meet the day-time power requirements of entire Kasargod and Kanjangad panchayats.

Contrary to the minister's stance, the Chief Secretary (CS) in an October 15 meeting decided to constitute a committee headed by District Collector, CEO of KPCSL and 11 high-ranking officers of the Agriculture Department to find ways to implement the project. Sources said the CS wanted the committee plant. In a meeting of the same committee in August, the CS said "Since the project involves considerable grees by the state government to the Centre and PSUs, the delay is causing considerable embarrassment to the state government".

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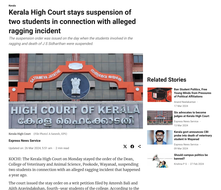

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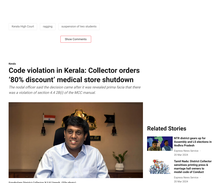

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THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The family of J S Sidharthan, the second-year student of the College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences in Pookode who was found hanging in the hostel after being tortured by SFI activists, expressed resentment over the delay in CBI taking over the probe. His father T Jayaprakash said the delay was meant to save the accused and added that the state government issued the notification consenting to CBI probe just to silence the family.

The state government issued the notification on March 9 and a missive was sent to the Centre on March 16 informing it about the state's willingness to hand over the case to the agency. However, the government sources maintained that there was no delay from their part and it was the central agency that's delaying the probe.

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Meanwhile, the Opposition parties have criticised the state government alleging that they were slow pedalling the procedures required for CBI's takeover of the case. Opposition Leader V D Satheesan accused the state government of delaying things so that the evidence can be destroyed before the CBI arrives.

NDA Thiruvananthapuram candidate Rajeev Chandrasekhar alleged that the case file has not yet been sent to the CBI. "The case file could have been transferred to the CBI within 24 hours of the announcement," he added.

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