

US rejects India's request for extradition of Anderson

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New Delhi: The US has rejected India's request for extradition of former Union Carbide chief Warren Anderson in connection with the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy, official sources said here on Monday.

The US Administrative department had rejected the extradition request on technical ground, the sources said.

The news comes a day after the Supreme Court had ordered a compensation of Rs 1,503 crore for the Bhopal gas victims.

A Bhopal city court ruled last year that Anderson should face charges of culpable homicide (under Section 304 IPC) and had lashed out at CBI for diluting the charge against him to negligence not amounting to murder.

Government contention of moving under Section 304 (A) of the IPC relating to offence of causing death by rash or negligent act was not accepted by the court.

The government had argued that under Section 304(A), it was an extraditable offence as per the provisions of the Extradition Treaty between India and the US.

The matter was being studied by the legal department of the CBI before a fresh extradition request could be moved to the United States for his extradition, they said.

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No Extradition Of Ex-Chief Of Union Carbide, US Tells India

Washington, July 21 (NNN): The United States has reportedly rejected the request of the Indian authorities for extradition of former Union Carbide chief Warren Anderson in connection with the 1984 Bhopal gas Tragedy.

Sources here said the US administrative department had cited technical grounds for rejection of India's request.

Last year, a Bhopal city court had ruled that Anderson should face charges of culpable

homicide (under Section 304 IPC). The court had criticised the Central Bureau of Investigation 'for diluting the charge against him to negligence not amounting to murder', and had rejected the government contention of moving under Section 304 (A) of the IPC relating to offence of causing death by rash or negligent act.

The government had argued that under Section 304(A), it was an extraditable offence as per the provisions of the Extradition Treaty between India and the US.

Sources said the CBI was studying the matter before going in for a fresh extradition request.

It is worth mentioning here that in a major relief to victims of deadly gas leak that claimed over 15,000 lives and injured 500,000 others, the Supreme Court of India on Monday asked the Central government to distribute Rs 15 billion (\$327.5 million) among them.

An Apex Court bench comprising Justices Shivaraj V Patil and B N Srikrishna passed the order on a petition filed by representatives of 36 affected wards in Bhopal, which had turned into a graveyard after the leakage of deadly methyl iso-cyante from the Carbide factory on the night of December 2-3, 1984.

According to campaigners nearly 20,000 others have died from the effects of the leak of methyl isocyanite gas in the years since.

The Supreme Court judges who delivered Monday's ruling expressed concern that 20 years after the tragedy the victims had not received adequate compensation.

The court told Bhopal's welfare commission to supervise the distribution of the money and report back in two months.

It said money should be given out to the victims in proportion to injuries sustained or losses suffered.

Under a settlement with the Indian government, Union Carbide – which became a wholly owned subsidiary of Dow Chemical in 1999 – gave \$470 million as compensation for the victims.

Over the years a part of the money was distributed as individual claims were settled.

However, the remainder was held up due to legal complications including verifying the identity of the claimants.

The Supreme Court has now directed that the entire balance be disbursed among all claimants.

The money has been held in an account in Reserve Bank of India (RBI) where it has

earned interest, increasing the value of the original deposit.

The court had directed that the money be put in a dollar account. The same money with interest on Monday stands at Rs 1,503 crore.

Some 20 years after the deadly tragedy, the Apex Court has directed the money to be distributed among the disaster victims, who include close relations of those dead or injured.

The bench directed the welfare commissioner, appointed under the Bhopal Gas Disaster (Processing of Claims) Act, 1985 to disburse the compensation on a pro-rate basis.

The court has sought a report from the commissioner in three months.

A lawyer representing the victims, S Muralidhar, described the order as a positive development. "But there's always a gap between the court's orders and the way it is implemented so we shall keep our fingers crossed," he told BBC News Online.

"We are very happy but all the promises should be made good. They should just deposit the money straight into my account. I do not want to keep going to the courts to get my money," said a victim while reacting to the verdict.

Hailing the Supreme Court order the victims of the tragedy said it would give them a new lease of life but demanded adequate safeguards to prevent misuse of the money.

"With the Supreme Court's order to disburse entire compensation money, gas disaster victims will get ample opportunities for their rehabilitation and medical care," said Rashida Bi, President, Gas Peedit Mahila Stationery Karmachari Sangh (GPMSKS).

Describing the Apex court's order as 'historic', she said if the Rs 1,503 crore lying with the Reserve Bank of India is distributed among them, the lives of thousands of affected people would be transformed.

Secretary of the Sangh, Champadevi Shukla said the court order is a 'major victory' for the gas disaster victims and would bring happiness in their lives.

The apex court also ordered the welfare commissioner of Bhopal Gas Relief Fund to file before it an account of how the money will be distributed. The court posted the matter for further hearing after two months.

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Want to help those still suffering from the world's worst industrial tragedy?

Join the Bhopal campaign! www.studentsforbhopal.org

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To laugh often and love much; to win the respect of intelligent persons and the affection of children; to earn the approbation of honest critics; to appreciate beauty; to give of one's self; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to have played and laughed with enthusiasm and sung with exultation; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived--that is to have succeeded.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson
