

January 16, 2008
Hid
Times of India

Visit village: HC to top official

Shibu Thomas | TNN

Mumbai: The Bombay high court on Thursday ordered N Arumugham, principal secretary, (social justice department) to visit villages Ghana, Makhala and Kohna in Melghat, Amravati, which had

DEATHS DUE TO MALNUTRITION

seen the maximum infant mortalities due to malnutrition. The division bench of Chief Justice Swatanter Kumar and Justice Dhananjay Chandrachud made it clear that in the event of the principal secretary failing to file a report on his findings in these villages, the chief secretary, the addi-



Maharashtra is not a backward state where people should die of malnutrition. If 500 malnutrition deaths are reported in an area, then obviously negligence has crept in somewhere

tional chief secretary of the state as well as the union secretary (health) will be summoned to the court.

"Maharashtra is not a backward state where people should die of malnutrition," said the judges. The court remarked that the progress of the state in tackling malnutrition and infant

deaths was "hardly satisfactory" and the ground reality was that Maharashtra has failed in its Constitutional duty.

"If 500 malnutrition deaths are reported in an area, then obviously negligence has crept in somewhere," said the court, when the state's advocate told the judges that all child deaths

were being examined. "If the state had been doing what it is supposed to do, there wouldn't have been so many deaths. Has any disciplinary action been taken against officers at any level," the judges asked.

The judges were hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by two Amravati-based doctors — Dr Ravindra Kolhe and Dr Rajendra Barma — about the plight of tribals. The PIL claimed that more than 11,000 children had died due to malnutrition in Melghat area in the last 16 years. Despite several court orders, there were no facilities, anganwadis, or gynaecologists in the area, alleged the PIL.

The court asked the government why MBBS doctors were not sent to the region.