

Malabar Cements for probe against its staff

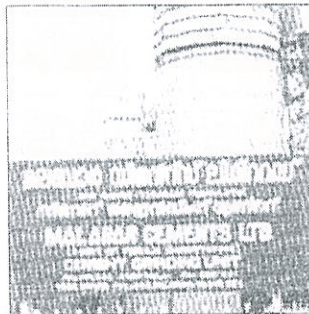
LaxmiPrasanna.Ajai
@timesgroup.com

Thiruvananthapuram: The state PSU Malabar Cements Limited (MCL) has sought a vigilance probe against some officials in the company suspected of colluding with private firms to stop bidders from participating in the company's tenders.

"Some officials, who left the company and then rejoined, are colluding with private firms to stop bidders from participating in the tenders of MCL or favouring disqualified parties for the benefit of private players in the cement industry," K Padmakumar, managing director, MCL, said.

"We have filed a complaint in this regard with the state vigilance," he said.

MCL has also suspended cement supplies to two dealers Mubarak agency in Pa-



lakkad and Popular Agency, Malappuram. "We have intimated the VACB director about their fraudulent activities," the official said.

Certain cement manufacturers and dealers who flout rules and also support the vendors who want to illegally monopolise the supply of materials to MCL at huge price, are making baseless allegations against MCL, the official said.

"Their intention is to scuttle the systems implemented in MCL to ensure

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transparency, to destabilise the existing operations and to sabotage steps taken by the MCL to garner a higher share in the Kerala market," Padmakumar said.

The course of expansion pursued by MCL by re-opening the Cherthala grinding unit, setting up of a bulk cement handling unit at Cochin Port and cutting channel costs in marketing is likely to help the company bring down the high cement price, which is hampering the construction sector.