



Away from the edge: **On waste disposal from**
the 1984 Bhopal plant accident

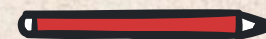
The incineration of toxic waste from the Bhopal tragedy took time and effort

Word / Phrase	Meaning (Simple)
Incinerated	Burned something completely
Toxic	Poisonous
Defunct	No longer working or existing
Sordid	Morally bad or dirty
Illustrative	Explaining or showing something clearly
Interventions	Actions taken to improve a situation
Assuage	To calm or relieve (e.g., fear, pain)
Emissions	Harmful gases or substances released
Artefacts	Man-made objects, often old or dangerous

Word / Phrase	Meaning (Simple)
Subsurface	Below the surface
Impetus	A force or reason for action
Valuation	Estimating the value of something
Proclaimed offender	Someone officially declared a criminal
Surveillance	Continuous observation or monitoring
Sporadically	Happening irregularly or rarely
Remediation	Fixing environmental damage
Self-motivated	Driven by internal desire, not pressure
Unify	Bring different things together

The Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board has confirmed that officials had incinerated 337 tonnes of toxic waste moved to a private waste treatment facility in Pithampur from the defunct Union Carbide facility in Bhopal. The event closes a single, but important, chapter in the sordid history of the 1984 Bhopal disaster, the state response to which pushed the city and its people to the edge. The successful incineration is illustrative in that it demanded interventions from the Madhya Pradesh High Court, the Supreme Court of India, and the Union Environment Ministry, among other stakeholders, over more than a decade. In the end, the State government was able to arrange for the waste to be safely disposed of — including an outreach exercise to assuage public anxiety over the emissions — within six months at a cost of ₹126 crore. Evidently the means have always existed; the political initiative to effect them has been wanting. This is an important detail: waste, once it has entered the environment, has a tendency to be converted to different forms; it seldom goes away.

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The toxic waste incinerated thus far has yielded more than 800 tonnes of ash and residue that officials will have to landfill in a scientific manner. Like solid waste landfills around the country, this new facility will require regular upkeep, monitoring, and funds of its own. The site of the Union Carbide plant also retains several more tonnes of contaminated soil and other hazardous artefacts, plus contaminated subsurface resources in the area.

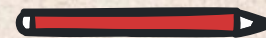
Crucially, much of the impetus for positive change in the matter, including waste removal, has come from victims' families, survivors, and activists rather than from the state. Survivors' groups have filed petitions arguing that deaths and injuries continue to be undercounted and that they are owed inflation-adjusted damages. Since the Supreme Court closed the door on the curative route, also in dispute is whether a new valuation of losses can be forced on The Dow Chemical Company, notwithstanding the fact that it remains a proclaimed offender.

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Long-term surveillance has been patchy, with activists and survivors alleging that the advisory committee appointed by the top court has met only sporadically and that local hospitals continue to suffer a shortage of specialist medical workers to attend to survivors. In the final analysis, Dow must account for all remediation activities. Both the State and the Centre must close pending settlement claims and attend on a self-motivated basis to the survivors' well-being, if required with the assistance of a new statutory body to unify health, relief, and remediation goals. Ultimately, the families must be able to move on.

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Q1. How much toxic waste was incinerated by officials at the private waste treatment facility in Pithampur?

- A. 126 tonnes
- B. 800 tonnes
- C. **337 tonnes** ←
- D. 500 tonnes
- E. 1260 tonnes

Q2. Which of the following stakeholders were involved in ensuring the incineration of toxic waste?

- A. Madhya Pradesh High Court
- B. Supreme Court of India
- C. Union Environment Ministry
- D. All of the above
- E. None of the above

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the Bhopal disaster aftermath:

- 1. The waste was disposed of safely within six months at a cost of ₹126 crore.**
- 2. The incinerated toxic waste produced over 800 tonnes of ash and residue.**
- 3. Local hospitals are well-equipped with specialist medical workers.**

Which of the above statements is/are correct?


- A. Only 1 and 2** **B. Only 2 and 3**
C. Only 1 and 3 **D. Only 2** **E. All 3**

Q4. What can be inferred about the political will regarding waste disposal from the article?

- A. Strong political action was always present.
- B. Political delay was the main reason for slow progress. ←
- C. Waste disposal was impossible due to lack of technology.
- D. The judiciary blocked all actions.
- E. The Centre took full initiative without any public input.

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Q5. What does the article imply about the future needs related to the contaminated site?

- A. It is now completely safe and needs no further attention.
- B. It should be sold to private developers.
- C. Continuous monitoring, upkeep, and funding will be essential. 
- D. The site should be turned into a tourist attraction.
- E. All hazardous artefacts have been removed.

Q6. What is the closest meaning of the word "assuage" as used in the article ("outreach exercise to assuage public anxiety")?

- A. Increase
- B. Examine
- C. Soothe
- D. Deny
- E. Justify



Q7. What best describes the tone of the article?

A. Celebratory and optimistic

B. Satirical and mocking

C. Neutral and disconnected

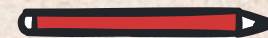
D. Critical yet constructive

E. Humorous and informal



In a major development, the Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board confirmed the burning of 337 tonnes of toxic waste that came from the old Union Carbide plant in Bhopal. This is part of efforts to clean up after the 1984 gas tragedy. The clean-up took over a decade and needed help from courts and the central government. Even after burning the waste, 800 tonnes of ash remain and must be safely buried.

The government acted only after years of delay, even though the technology was available. Survivors and activists pushed for change more than the authorities did. They still demand proper medical help and fair compensation. Hospitals lack specialists, and long-term health monitoring has been poor. There are also questions about the role of Dow Chemical, the company now linked to Union Carbide. The article ends by saying the government must do more to help the victims and finish the clean-up, so families can finally move on.

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