

# Kerala to implead in rubber case

Staff Reporter

**KOCHI:** The Kerala Government has filed an intervention application in a special leave petition filed by State Bank of Travancore before the Supreme Court against a Kerala High Court Division Bench verdict that rubber cultivated land is agricultural land.

Minister for Law and Revenue K. M. Mani told *The Hindu* on Wednesday that the government had decided to implead in the case after the issue was discussed in detail and a note prepared for the consideration of the Minister for Agriculture. It was a general consensus that the Government would im-

plead in the case. The case comes up in the Supreme Court on February 25. Sources said that the petition had already been filed before the Supreme Court through the Standing Counsel for the State.

Indian Farmers' Movement (Infam) was among the organisations that appealed to the government and the Rubber Board to implead in the case citing that the small and marginal farmers did not have the wherewithal to fight it.

The Thodupuzha-Moovattupuzha Karshaka Koottayma, combine of farmers from the Thodupuzha and Moovattupuzha areas, is another group that has filed an inter-

vention petition, said convenor V. V. Chackochan.

The SBT contention is that land on which rubber is cultivated is not agricultural land and as such cannot be out of the purview of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act. Even if a bank extends a loan against a piece of agricultural land, it cannot take possession of the land in case of default. Meanwhile, it is learnt that the Rubber Board would not implead in the case. Board Chairman Sheela Thomas said on Wednesday that the Board had furnished all the details regarding the case to the Union Commerce Ministry.