

'Compliance to SC order on fitting CCTVs at police stations severely lacking'

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POINTING at insufficient compliance of the 2020 Supreme Court order on the installation of CCTV cameras in police stations across the country, response to an RTI filed by human rights organisation People's Watch has revealed that only Karnataka's Mysuru and Meghalaya's Shillong police units have adhered to the apex court's directions. The organisation had sought details of the CCTV cameras from 406 district (rural) and city police units.

Henry Tiphagne, executive director of People's Watch, said, "Among the 406 units, only 106 gave us information as per the RTI Act. We covered almost all of the district and city police units in TN and other southern states. In Tamil Nadu, none of them have complied with the guidelines of the apex court."

Further, he said as many as 252 police units, including Virudhunagar, Krishnagiri, Tirupathur, Tiruvallur and Villuppuram, denied them information. "The information received from the remaining 48 police units, including Salem and Ramanathapuram, is insufficient," said Tiphagne.

According to the RTI reply from Tirunelveli district police unit, it has installed 213 CCTVs in its 37 police stations. Among them, 34 stations have installed six cameras. Three stations including Ambasamudram, where suspended ASP Balveer Singh and other police person-

WHAT THE SC ORDER SAYS?

1 Install CCTVs at entry and exit points, main gate, lock-ups, corridors, lobby/reception area, verandas/outhouses, room of inspector and sub-inspector, station hall, in front of the compound, outside toilets, duty officer's room and rear side of police stations

2 Equip CCTVs with night vision and audio recording facility

3 CCTV system should have a storage capacity of 18 months

OBSERVATION IN 2020

Upon checking compliance affidavits and action-taken reports filed by 14 states, including TN, over the installation of CCTVs, the SC had expressed dissatisfaction stating that majority of the affidavits and reports failed to disclose the exact position of CCTVs

nel allegedly tortured suspects, have just three cameras.

Tiphagne said the information collected would be submitted before the SC on April 18, when it has scheduled the next hearing in the 'Paramvir Singh Saini vs Baljit Singh' case. "We will also file a detailed affidavit separately on the inadequate number of CCTVs and missing video footage of Ambasamudram station," he added.

According to the RTI reply, CCTVs in Theni police stations can only store footage for 12 days. Five police stations in Tirunelveli city have not installed CCTVs at its entrance. Audio recording facility is not available at 31 stations in Thoothukudi district and eight stations in Chennai city.

(For the full report, visit www.newindianexpress.com)