



## **Custodial torture: Former Ambasamudram ASP Balveer Singh booked**

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MADURAI: Former Ambasamudram assistant superintendent of police Balveer Singh has been booked in connection with the alleged custodial torture at various stations. The Tirunelveli district crime branch booked him under IPC sections 324, 326 and 506 (I) for causing hurt and threatening.

Advocate V Maharajan from Netaji Subhash Senai (that brought the issue to the public sphere) welcomed the FIR filed against the IPS officer. However, he said that the sections were not strong enough. The former ASP should be booked under Section 307 of the IPC for the attempt to murder, he told the reporters.

### **Probe continues**

Principal secretary to the Tamil Nadu government P Amudha, who has been appointed as the high-level officer to probe the allegations, carried out her second round of investigation at the Ambasamudram taluk office on Monday. She will be conducting the inquiries on Tuesday as well.

The first day of the second round of investigation, unlike the first one which turned out to be a no-show by the victims, ended with ten of them deposing before the investigating officer. The victims included Arunkumar and his mother Rajeswari, Ganesan, Vedanarayanan, Chellappa, Esakkimuthu, Mariappan, E Mariappan and two juveniles. All of them testified against the IPS officer.

Boothapandian, grandfather of Surya who deposed before Cheranmahadevi sub-collector Shabir Alam that he had fallen down and broken his teeth, said his grandson had gone missing after the inquiry. Boothapandian said his family was being threatened by the police and Surya had given false testimony fearing the police. The man told the reporters that Surya had shown his broken teeth after the custodial torture at the police station.

Human rights activist Henri Tiphagne from People's Watch, Madurai, who appeared before the investigating officer, told reporters that the district collector had failed to act as per the law. He should have investigated the case, visited the police stations where the custodial torture happened and taken stock of the CCTV footage at the stations. Tiphagne pointed out that CCTV cameras were not available at some of these stations. The NGO would take the next course of action based on the outcome of the inquiry by the high-level officer, he said.

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