



13 protesters killed in 18 Tuticorin police firing 'at behest of industrialist': Madras high court

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CHENNAI: "We believe that the police firing against anti-Sterlite protesters in 2018, wherein 13 people were killed, was a predetermined act carried out at the behest of an industrialist," Madras high court said on Monday. "All these things happened because one particular industrialist wanted it to happen. He wanted to teach the protesters a lesson and the authorities facilitated it," a division bench of Justice S S Sundar and Justice N Senthil Kumar said.

It then directed the state's Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) to investigate the assets of all the officers, including IPS and IAS officers, who were serving in Tuticorin at the relevant point of time. "Assets not just in their names but also in the names of their wives, and close relatives to be collected and produced before this court. From two years prior to the incident and two years after," the judges said. The court directed DVAC to file a preliminary report in two weeks.

The court further expressed dismay over the manner in which CBI probed the incident. "The investigation was not done in a fair manner. How can CBI file a report absolving the allegations against the authorities who were indicted by the Justice Aruna Jagadeesan commission," the court asked. This shows the inefficiency of the CBI in conducting the probe, it said.

The court passed the orders on a plea moved by activist Henri Tiphagne seeking to reopen the probe closed by National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) into the incident.

According to the petitioner, NHRC's decision to close its suo motu probe into the incident was arbitrary.

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