

Encounter: Search on for two aides of history-sheeter

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Tuticorin: More than 30 hours after the killing of history sheeter S Duraimurugan near Muthaiahpuram in rural Tuticorin on Friday, the police were yet to nab two of his accomplices who fled the scene. Duraimurugan, 40, who has 35 cases including seven murders and 27 theft and robbery cases against him, was gunned down by police when he allegedly attacked a police constable and a sub-inspector with a machete.

His accomplices Arockiaraj and Raja had managed to flee. "Two special teams are on the lookout for the duo," Tuticorin district superintendent of police S Jayakumar told TOI on Saturday night. The SP said constable David Raja and SI Raja Prabhu, who had suffered cut injuries in the attack, needed six and five stitches respectively on their left hands and were still hospitalised. The Muthaiahpuram police booked Duraimurugan under Section 307 (attempt to murder) of IPC and Section 176 (1-A) (inquiry by magistrate on a death under police custody or in action involving the police) of the CrPC.

Meanwhile, judicial magistrate II of Tuticorin R H Uma Devi conducted an inquiry by visiting the spot of occurrence, recorded the statements of his mother and siblings and the two injured policemen at Tuticorin MCH. This was followed by autopsy on Duraimurugan in the afternoon, which was videographed. His relatives later buried the body.

Meanwhile, human rights body People's Watch has slammed the chief minister and director general of police for re-emergence of the encounter culture. Executive director of the organisation Henri Tiphagne said the police should not take the law into their hands. "We are not saying that the person killed in Tuticorin is a good man. But this encounter could lead to a series of encounters in the southern region, like the past," he said.

The government should not make police personnel in the lower ranks scapegoats in the two incidents but fix responsibility on the SPs, deputy inspector general of police and the inspector general of police, he said. While expressing concern that the encounter could be used against political enemies, he said the human rights commission should probe both the encounters in the state this week.

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