

Pudukkottai activist murder: Inspector who delayed FIR, suspended
Thirumayam police inspector Gunasekaran, who was investigating the murder of activist K Jagaber Ali, has been suspended after accusations of multiple procedural lapses including a 22-hour delay in filing the FIR.



Inspector Gunasekaran

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The Tamil Nadu government suspended Thirumayam police inspector Gunasekaran who was investigating the murder of activist K Jagaber Ali. The activist's family has accused Gunasekaran of procedural lapses including a 22-hour delay in filing the First Information Report (FIR). Jagaber had recently gone public with allegations that illegal mining operations in Pudukkottai district were costing the state losses to the tune of Rs 840 crore.

Jagaber, also a member of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), died after being hit by a tipper lorry in Pudukkottai district's Vengalur on January 17. Police initially ruled the death a hit-and-run, but Jagaber's family suspected foul play and alleged that the body had been staged to look like an accident.

In a video recorded before his death, Jagaber had said that a company identified as RR Sand Crushers was involved in extensive illegal mining in the area. He had added that local authorities had failed to take action despite his complaints to the local tahsildar, Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO), District Revenue Officer (DRO), Collector, the Minerals Department and others.

After his death, Jagaber's family said that there had been a 22-hour delay in filing the First Information Report (FIR). His wife Mariyam had previously told TNM that Thirumayam police had at first been reluctant to even file an FIR, insisting Jagaber's death was an accident. Following intervention from the local jamat, the FIR was registered under Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) section 194(1) (suspicious death). It was only later that the case was finally registered as a murder. The family have also alleged that important evidence such as call recordings have been deleted from Jagaber's phone and that the crime scene looked staged. Jagabar had allegedly received multiple death threats. No inquest was conducted and no video was recorded of the autopsy as per procedure, they have further said.

Several activists, including Henri Tiphagne, executive director of the human rights NGO People's Watch, had pointed out to TNM earlier that an executive magistrate is lawfully bound to conduct an inquest in such cases. "Clearly, the authorities have prevented it. Everyone in the police force should be held responsible for the lapses," he had said at the time.

Reports say that Trichy Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Varun Kumar suspended Gunasekaran for also maintaining ties with rowdies, corruption charges and taking bribes from illegal liquor shops, apart from his alleged negligence in Jagaber's case.

Jagaber's murder and the multiple allegations surrounding his death led to widespread uproar. The Pudukkottai police have now arrested four individuals including the owner of RR Sand Crushers quarry R Rasu, and three others identified as S Muruganandhan, Kasinathan, and R Dinesh Kumar, according to reports. RR Sand Crushers' co-owner Ramaiya surrendered at Namanasamuthiram police station on January 23.