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# HC directs court to expedite trial in custodial death case

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Madurai: Madras high court has directed the VI additional district and sessions court in Madurai to expedite trial in the Avaniyapuram custodial death case reported in Madurai district in 2019.

A youth, Balamurugan, was arrested by the police as he was one of the accused in the abduction of R Parthiban for a ransom of 20 lakh. Balamurugan sustained injuries in custody at Avaniyapuram police station, and succumbed at Govt Rajaji Hospital in 2019. Initially, police registered the case, and subsequently, it was transferred to CB-CID. The CB-CID registered a case against seven police personnel.

Balamurugan's father Muthukaruppan filed a petition in 2019 before the HC seeking a CBI probe. Subsequently, Muthukaruppan withdrew his petition by changing the counsel.

Henri Tiphagne, the counsel who earlier appeared for Muthukaruppan, in a letter to the court in 2019, indicated that the police officers were coercing the parents of the deceased not to depose against them. He also alleged that the petition was withdrawn by Muthukaruppan because of threats from local police. He submitted several audio recordings in a sealed cover to the court. Since Muthukaruppan withdrew the petition, the court initiated suo motu proceedings in this case.

When it was taken up for hearing on March 4, the govt pleader submitted that the chargesheet was filed and it was taken on file of the VI additional district and sessions court in Madurai. The case was posted to April 9 for framing charges.

A division bench of justice J Nisha Banu and justice S Srimathy observed that in view of the submissions, no further orders were required to be passed in this suo motu petition. Hence, the judges disposed of the petition by giving the direction to the trial court.