



Tamil Nadu: ASP accused of breaking suspects' teeth placed in vacancy reserve

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TIRUNELVELI: Balveer Singh, the young IPS officer accused of custodial torture, was on Monday removed as Ambasamudram assistant superintendent of police and placed in vacancy reserve pending inquiry.

State director-general of police C Sylendra Babu issued the orders a day after the allegations of custodial torture came to light. Tirunelveli district collector K P Karthikeyan said an inquiry is being conducted by Cheranmahadevi sub-divisional magistrate Mohamed Shabbir Alam. Any further action would be based on the inquiry report.

Singh, who hails from Tonk in Rajasthan, is a BTech in mechanical engineering from IIT-Bombay. The 2020-batch IPS officer was employed briefly by Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) before clearing the Union Public Service Commission exams. This is his first posting, from August 2022.

Singh is accused of torturing six people, Esakimuthu, Mariappan, Chellappa, S Mariappan, Arul alias Antony and Suresh, who were arrested on March 10 in connection with an attempt to murder case registered at Ambasamudram police station. Speaking to TOI, Esakimuthu, said they were tortured without even being allowed to explain themselves.

“On March 10 afternoon, we were the ones who brought the other group to the police in self-defence when they tried to attack us with weapons. However, at the police station, no one listened to us. We were tortured and the police warned us of dire consequences if we complained to the magistrate,” Esakimuthu said. Once they were released on bail on March 18, Esakimuthu and his brother Chellappa and Mariappan made a video recounting their ordeal. This went viral on social media over the weekend.

They accused Singh of using large chunks of gravel to knock their teeth out. They accused him of filling their mouths with gravel and slapping them repeatedly. They also accused him of crushing the testicles of Mariappan, who got married a month-and-a-half ago.

“It was horrifying to see my brothers Chellappa and Mariappan get tortured right in front of my eyes. I begged for the torture to stop. Even when the judicial magistrate asked us if we had something to say, I had tears in my eyes. But, we could not say anything as the cops threatened to harm our family if we said anything,” said Esakkimuthu.

The brothers alleged that the ASP has tortured many others in a similar manner. Vetha Narayanan, an autorickshaw driver, who was questioned in connection with a

domestic dispute case at Vikramasingapuram police station, said the ASO pulled out one of his teeth using a cutting plier on March 22. "My wife who lives separately had filed a complaint over a domestic dispute. I never thought I would get such treatment when it is not even a major complaint," he asked.

PMK leader Dr S Ramadoss said Singh should be sacked and legal action taken against him. Recalling that this was happening after the Sathankulam custodial deaths, Henri Tiphagne, executive director, People's Watch, sought action against police officers for hiding the truth.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/madurai/asp-accused-of-breaking-suspects-teeth-placed-in-vacancy-reserve/articleshowprint/99048835.cms>