

Family of 26-year-old man allege custodial torture led to his death

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 Representative Image for death

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MADURAI: High tension prevailed at the Madurai Government Rajaji Hospital on Sunday after a 26-year-old youth, arrested in connection with an assault case, died in judicial custody. The parents of the deceased have alleged brutal custodial torture and caste-based discrimination by the Manamadurai police.

The deceased, identified as Akash Delison (26), a graduate from Krishnarajapuram, was arrested alongside another youth, Guna (23), following a CCTV-recorded sickle attack on two individuals in Zion Nagar on Friday.

According to police sources, Akash sustained a fracture in his right leg after falling while attempting to evade arrest. Following a remand order by the Manamadurai Judicial Magistrate until March 18, he was admitted to the prisoners' ward at the Madurai Government Rajaji Hospital for treatment. Authorities stated that Akash developed "breathing difficulties" early Sunday morning and passed away shortly after.

However, the youth's parents, Rajesh Kannan and Anandhi, who spoke to reporters at the hospital, levelled grave accusations against the personnel of the Manamadurai police station.

The father alleged that the police took Akash to a secluded forested area under the guise of an investigation. "They placed stones on his legs and beat him until his bones shattered," Rajesh Kannan told reporters.

The family further alleged that the police targeted Akash using casteist slurs during the assault.

The mother, Anandhi, claimed that police officials had previously threatened the family, stating, "If we get our hands on your son, we will kill him."

The bereaved family has refused to accept Akash's body, demanding the personal intervention of VCK Chief and MP Thol Thirumavalavan.

Meanwhile, human rights activist Henry Tiphagne, Executive Director of People's Watch Tamil Nadu, issued a video statement on Sunday condemning the police brutality. He claimed that Delison's death is the 26th custodial death.

The incident has sparked a wave of unrest in the region, particularly as it follows the recent sensational murder of temple guard Ajit Kumar within the same police jurisdiction.

A heavy police contingent, led by Manamadurai Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Raja, has been deployed at the Madurai hospital mortuary to prevent any law-and-order flare-ups. Senior officials are currently holding talks with the family and community leaders to pacify the protesters.

The body remains at the Madurai Rajaji Hospital morgue pending further legal proceedings and a magisterial inquiry.