



HC dissatisfied with probe into custodial death case

Expressing dissatisfaction over the progress made in the investigation into the 2019 Avaniapuram custodial death case, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Tuesday observed that there was not only a delay but also lapses on the part of the investigating officer. The CB-CID is probing the custodial death case.

A Division Bench of Acting Chief Justice Munishwar Nath Bhandari and Justice Pushpa Sathyanarayana took note of the fact that the incident took place in 2019. But, the probe was yet to be completed. The CB-CID took over the investigation in 2021.

The court observed that it would not make any further comments on the investigation after an assurance was given by the CB-CID that the investigation would be completed and the final report submitted by December 31. It was submitted that the CCTV footage was obtained in December. The case was adjourned till January, 2022.

The court had initiated suo motu proceedings based on the letter written to the High Court Bench by advocate Henri Tiphagne, who represented the father of the victim pro bono. The advocate wrote the letter after the father who had earlier sought a CBI inquiry into the case decided to withdraw the petition.

Mr. Tiphagne said that the father withdrew the petition because of the threat from the local police. He alleged that the parents were being coerced not to depose against the police officers said to be involved in the case.

The petitioner, P. Muthukaruppan, father of 22-year-old victim M. Balamurugan, had alleged that his son had sustained injuries in police custody and later died at the Government Rajaji Hospital. However, in an unexpected turn of events, Muthukaruppan decided to withdraw the petition.

It was said that Balamurugan and his accomplices were arrested for their alleged involvement in the kidnapping of a youth. The group had demanded ransom from the youth's parents.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Madurai/hc-dissatisfied-with-probe-into-custodial-death-case/article38007390.ece>