Action taken against 21 named in Justice Aruna report, govt tells HC

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The Tamil Nadu government on Friday told the Madras high court that it has initiated disciplinary and departmental action, including suspension from service, against 21 government personnel named in the Justice Aruna Jagadeesan commission report which investigated the police firing and killing of 13 anti-Sterlite protesters in 2018. The personnel include then Tuticorin Collector N. Venkatesh, south zone IG Sailesh Kumar Yadav, DIG (Tirunelveli range) Kapil Kumar C. Saratkar and former SP P. Mahendran.

The information was given in a status report submitted by Advocate General R. Shanmugasundaram to the division bench comprising Justice Nisha Banu and Justice N. Mala. The court was hearing a petition submitted by human rights activist Henry Tiphagne, who sought a direction to re-investigate the case.

Submitting a report on the action taken on the police and revenue officials named in the report, the A-G said the state government had accepted the report. The government had initiated action on 21 persons indicted by the commission including IAS and IPS officers and framed charges under rule 10 of the All India Services (discipline and appeal) Rules.

The explanations of N. Venkatesh, Shailesh Kumar Yadav, Kapil Kumar C Saratkar and P. Mahendran are under examination, the A-G said and explained the action taken against 21 government personnel. Senior IAS officer Dheeraj Kumar has been appointed as the inquiring authority to look into the disciplinary action, Shanmugasundaram said.

The explanations given by DSP R. Lingathirumaran and inspector N Hariharan are being examined. Four police officials including then inspector Thirumalai were suspended.

Hearing the submission, the court asked the Attorney General to file an explanation on the charges framed against the 21 personnel and raised questions over the status of the Central Bureau of Investigation investigation into the case. The hearing was adjourned to December 11.