

## **Madras High Court orders swab test in body of student found dead in Pudukottai**

*The judge also named two forensic doctors for conducting a swab test and reassessing Sowmya's body condition. The entire process should be video graphed, the judge added.*



Madurai bench of Madras High court

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MADURAI: The state police told the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Friday that investigation into the death of a 20-year-old female found dead in a well in her Pudukkottai house, was proceeding on the right lines.

The additional public prosecutor made the statement when the court was hearing a petition filed by father of the deceased R Sowmya, V Ramesh seeking a direction to conduct a re-postmortem.

Sowmya, a final-year student of Diploma in Medical Laboratory Technology at Pudukkottai Medical College Hospital, went missing in the evening hours of December 25, 2024. Her parents lodged a police complaint. Two days later, her mother found her body in a 70-feet well behind their house.

Ramesh alleged that his daughter was sexually assaulted and murdered by their

neighbour and that her body was thrown into the well. He said that if she had fallen into the well on her own, she would have suffered grievous injuries but no injuries or fractures were found on her body, he added.

Claiming that the earlier postmortem was not conducted as per the guidelines set by the High Court in a 2019 case, Ramesh sought direction for a re-postmortem to be conducted by a team of at least two senior forensic experts from two different medical college hospitals accompanied by an independent forensic expert of the petitioner's choice or in the presence of an advocate. He also wanted the process to be videographed.

However, the additional public prosecutor claimed that the investigation was proceeding on the right lines and the investigation officer is probing the case diligently. He also added that the postmortem was conducted and the cause of death would be determined after receiving the chemical analysis reports. Once the petitioner gives consent for conducting a swab test, the test would be conducted as per guidelines and the process would be videographed, he added and sought time to file a report on further developments in the case.

Hearing both sides, Justice M Nirmal Kumar directed Ramesh to give his consent to the swab test on Saturday (January 4). The judge also named two forensic doctors for conducting a swab test and reassessing Sowmya's body condition. The entire process should be videographed, the judge added. After completion of the same, Ramesh should receive Sowmya's body and perform last rites, the judge directed and adjourned the case to January 23.

Based on the directions, the swab test, X-Ray and CT scan was performed on Sowmya's body on Saturday, Advocate Henri Tiphagne told TNIE. Following this, Sowmya's parents received her body and completed last rites the same day, he added.

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