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News

International Peoples Tribunal writes to CM

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'ALLOW US TO PROBE'

MUDDASIR ALI

SHOPIAN CASE

Srinagar, Jan 4: The International Peoples' Tribunal, which brought to fore the unmarked graves issue in Kashmir, has sought the chief minister Omar Abdullah's permission to probe the death of Aasiya Jan and Neelofar of Shopian, whom the CBI had reported in its investigation to have died of drowning in May last year.

If allowed, the Tribunal is mulling to rope in "internationally reputed experts" in the fields of anthropology, forensic science, medicines and experts on gender to analyses and inquire into the findings by various institutions permitted by the Jammu and Kashmir government.

In a 1-page letter to CM, the Tribunal has cited that Majlis-e-Mushawarat, a local non-political organization seeking justice in the case approached them on December 30 last year seeking that the Tribunal should inquire into the incident.

"They have done so on the contentions that the state institutions, and investigations authorized by them, have been unable to deliver accurate understanding of the matter or define a mechanism for justice," the letter reads.

Though the CBI concluded in its investigation, submitted to the state High Court which is monitoring the case, that the duo had "died due to drowning and had not been raped and murdered", the victims' family and Majlis have termed the report as "ploy to shield the real culprits" and vowed to fight till "justice" was delivered in the case. Even the High Court Bar Association, which had at the outset raised objection over the transfer of the case to the CBI, rejected its findings.

"Given the contested social facts, legal and political circumstances of the events that followed after the bodies were recovered (from a nearby river in Shopian town on May 29 last year), and the investigation that followed, we are convinced of the efficacy of an independent inquiry into the matter," the IPT letter reads.

The Tribunal has several members including its convener, Dr Angana P Chatterjee who is also Prof Anthropology at California Institute of Integral Studies, human right activists Parvez Imroz, Gautam Naviakha, Zahir-ud-Din, advocate Mihr Desai, and Khuram Parveez.

For inquiry, the Tribunal has sought access to all CRPF and army camps, and police stations in the Shopian districts, access to documents which had formed evidentiary basis of the "state's conclusion on the event, including forensic reports and the testimonials rendered by security forces and state officials."

The Tribunal had also sought access to security forces and medical personnel and officials of the SIT which had testified before the Jan Commission and collaborated with its report. Besides the Tribunal had also sought support of local officers who assisted the CBI in its inquiry.

"We note that you (CM) have promised attentiveness and accountability to human right issue in Kashmir. We hope you will agree in order that an independent, transparent and peoples' investigation may ensue," the letter reads.

However, the state Law and Parliamentary Affairs minister, Ali Muhammad Sagar told Greater Kashmir that "The state government has nothing to do with the application by the tribunal. It is the jurisdiction of the Centre. Let them approach the Centre."

Omar to decide after consultation with HM, DM

Srinagar: The Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, said that he will take a decision on the letter after consultation with Home and Defence ministry.

"I have received an email from Khuram Parvez and will send it to the Home department for analysing it. I will have to discuss it with the Home minister and Defence minister before taking any decision," Omar told Greater Kashmir over phone.

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