

Delhi Police chief gets NHRC notice over custodial death of 40-yr-old rape accused

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Days after a 40-year-old man, arrested for raping a 14-year-old girl, was found dead in the lock-up at Samaypur Badli police station, the National Human Rights Commission has sent a notice to the Delhi Police Commissioner, saying the man was in lawful custody of the police and his "right to life has been violated and the state cannot escape its liability".

After the incident, one Constable Yashveer was placed under suspension for "negligence" as the man's family insisted that he had been tortured in police custody.

"The commission took suo motu cognisance of alleged suicide of 40-year-old rape accused in police custody and directs issuance of notice to the Commissioner of Police, Delhi calling for a detailed report in the matter within two weeks," the commission said in the

statement.

The NHRC has noticed that this case of "custodial death has not been reported" by authorities within 24 hours of its occurrence, and the authorities are expected to explain the reasons, it said.

All the reports, including the inquest and the postmortem reports accompanying video CDs and medical reports, of the deceased before being lodged in the lockup should be forwarded

to the commission, the statement added.

The rights panel had also sought details of the persons, who were put in the lockup in Swarup Nagar police station and Samaypur Badli police station for any reason, during the period the man was lodged. "It is expected that the magisterial enquiry in the matter will be completed without any further delay," the NHRC said.

The man — identified as Dharmendra — was accord-

ing to the police out on parole while serving his sentence in a robbery cum murder case.

"The police personnel have apparently failed to do their lawful duty at two stages, first when a person with a history of committing crime was out on parole; it was expected from the local police station to keep an eye on his activities through beat constables and other sources. Secondly, when such a person was kept

in the police lock-up, it was normal to be more vigilant to keep check on him during his stay inside it," the statement said.

Apart from this, considering the trauma suffered by the rape victim who is a minor, the chief secretary of Delhi is directed to inform about her health condition as well as the relief, rehabilitation and counselling provided to her by the administration, it said.