Extra-judicial killings in UP: A badge of honour or a matter of shame?
https://www.sabrangindia.in/article/extra-judicial-killings-badge-honour-or-matter-shame

In March 2023, stark figures revealed by the state government proudly showcased that the police in Uttar Pradesh (UP) had carried out more than 10,000 encounters over the past 6 years, episodes in which 178 persons accused of crimes, were shot dead.

Encounters or what should be more accurately termed “extra-judicial killings” are a fanciful practice indulged in by trigger happy cops who then wear the “encounter pecialist” tag with pride. When you actually call it by the latter name, is when you realize the gravity of the term and its implication. Such killings are part and parcel of vigilante justice where the police treat the accused, who has not been proven guilty in court, as guilty and lawlessly punishes him, by taking his life.

In official data released by UP government in March, it proudly revealed how it had illed 178 persons accused of serious offences after having conducted 10,713 encounters, reported Hindustan Times. Meerut had recorded that highest number of encounters 3,152) followed by Agra (1,844) and Bareilly (1,497). In each of these districts, 63, 14 and 7 persons had been eliminated, respectively.

This averages to about a total of five extra-judicial killings every over the last six years! Proudly declaring the high number of these “encounter killings” to be a badge of honour, Additional Director-General (law and order) of the U.P. Police, Prashant Kumar, told Hindustan Times on April 16, 2023 that this collective police action is a “befitting reply to criminals”.

As of August 2021, at least 3,302 accused were injured in encounters in UP since March 2017 (that is when Yogi Adityanath first became the Chief Minister of the state) and these injuries are generally below the wait, on the legs, leaving many disabled.

It is rare that police personnel ever get punished or reprimanded for taking the law into their own hands. Rare is it even that a criminal complaint, an FIR gets registered in such cases. In one such case, in February 2022, an FIR was filed against then Superintendent of Police, Additional Superintendent of Police, three circle officers and in-charges of 10 police stations. The incident occurred a staggering 19 years ago in October 2004 when the Jalalabad Police shot two persons accused of dacoity. What evidence for trial is likely to survive after close to two decades?

Official data accessed from the UP police in 2018 revealed that within 10 months of Yogi Adityanath coming to power in UP, 34 accused persons had died in 1,142 encounters leaving 265 injured.
Many of those killed in such encounters are allegedly “wanted criminals” with a bounty on their heads. For instance, gangster Vikas Dubey who was killed in July 2020 when the vehicle he was traveling in allegedly overturned and he tried to escape; he is reported to have a series of serious cases against him; ganster Tinku Kapala with a bounty of Rs 1 lakh was similarly killed in July 2020, Bangladeshi gangster Hamza was killed in October 2021, gangster Vinod Kumar Singh, with a bounty of Rs 1 lakh was killed in September 2022.

Most recently, April 13, Atiq Ahmed’ son Asad (wanted in the case of murder of Umesh Pal Singh) and Ghulam were killed in an encounter in Jhansi on Thursday.

Do encounters have a political connection?

The linkage between the increase in numbers of extra-judicial killings and the ruling party in the state become fairly apparent when the higher echelons bosses of the same outfit claim political credit, even using it as propaganda to demonstrate an improvement in law and order situation. Ajay Bisht aka Adityanath has self-proclaimed this phenomenon as his ‘zero-tolerance’ policy against anti-social elements. He has received high level endorsement with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah both showering praise for the improved law and order situation given that the state is the chosen venue for the Global Investors Summit. The rhetoric being that this attracts more investment.

Many of these extra-judicial killings over the past years have been attributed to Adityanath’s “Operation Clean”.

Barely two months after assuming power in March 2017, Yogi had said in an interview, “agar aap apradh karenge, toh thok diye jayenge” (if you commit a crime, you will be smashed/killed), hardly befitting a chief minister who occupies a constitutional post. Another name given to the policy that encourages such killings is “Operation Langda” (Operation Disabled/Lame Leg) which implies that many accused were rendered disabled after being shot in their legs during these encounters. In 2021, just before Republic Day, the state’s chief secretary –again the senior post bureaucrat from the IAS cadre who swears an oath under the Constitution --had asked district magistrates to popularise the phrase “Ab Tak 3,000” (Three Thousand and Counting..) describing the number of “encounters” committed by the Adityanath government until then.

There is no centralised data on such killings. Information provided by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), “encounter deaths” were highest in number in Chhattisgarh (191) followed by UP (117) and Assam (50). The period for which this data has been made available is January 1, 2017 and January 31, 2022.

What exactly lies behind these killings?

A 2018 article in Newsclick wrote, “The testimonies of eyewitnesses and family members of those who were killed in the ‘encounters’ and a close examination of the FIRs and post-
mortem reports clearly show that most of these killings are cold blooded murders – where no gun battle apparently took place.

For many of those killed or injured, it appears that the police posthumously inserted clauses of criminality in their record to justify the killings or injuries. The law is clear and each of these killings is a violation: even someone with criminal records cannot – under any circumstances – be gunned down in this way, the police if bound to follow due process. The staggering numbers of false and manipulated criminal complaints and FIRs, the absence of integrity and accountability in police investigation further strengthens arguments against this arbitrary practice.

Despite numerous judicial pronouncements, the abhorrent practice continues within law enforcement, police practice. Far from penalising these extra-judicial killings, since the CRPC protects the policeman from “acts done in good faith”, a pervasive trigger happy force enjoys wielding the gun and functioning with impunity.

Besides, Bollywood films and pop culture glorify the encounter shoot-out, the middle and privileged classes and castes root for “an eye for an eye” approach. The abysmal delay and decay in the administration of criminal justice becomes an excuse for the police taking law into their own hands.

Legal jurisprudence

When cases finally reach the higher judiciary, the Supreme Court, the jurisprudence has been unequivocal. Much damage is however already done by then and rare is it that guilty policeman are punished.

Speaking against extra-judicial killings, the Supreme Court in Om Prakash and others Vs State of Jharkhand [Criminal Appeal o. 1491 of 2012; decided on September 26, 2012] said,

“It is not the duty of the police officers to kill the accused merely because he is a dreaded criminal. Undoubtedly, the police have to arrest the accused and put them up for trial. This court has repeatedly admonished trigger happy police personnel, who liquidate criminals and project the incident as an encounter. Such killings must be deprecated. They are not recognized as legal by our criminal justice administration system. They amount to State sponsored terrorism.” (Para 38)

In Prakash Kadam vs Ramprasad Vishwanath Gupta [Criminal Appeal Nos.1174-1178 of 2011; decided on May 13, 2011], the Supreme Court prima facie held that some police officers and staff were engaged by some private persons to kill their opponent and that the police behaved like contract killers and did a fake encounter. The court, in its judgement, said,

“Fake ‘encounters’ are nothing but cold blooded, brutal murder by persons who are supposed to uphold the law. In our opinion if crimes are committed by ordinary people, ordinary punishment should be given, but if the offence is committed by policemen much
harsher punishment should be given to them because they do an act totally contrary to their duties.” (Para 25)

“We warn policemen that they will not be excused for committing murder in the name of ‘encounter’ on the pretext that they were carrying out the orders of their superior officers or politicians, however high. In the Nuremberg trials the Nazi war criminals took the plea that ‘orders are orders’, nevertheless they were hanged. If a policeman is given an illegal order by any superior to do a fake ‘encounter’, it is his duty to refuse to carry out such illegal order, otherwise he will be charged for murder, and if found guilty sentenced to death. The ‘encounter’ philosophy is a criminal philosophy, and all policemen must know this. Trigger happy policemen who think they can kill people in the name of ‘encounter' and get away with it should know that the gallows await them.” (Para 26)

In PUCL Vs State of Maharashtra [Criminal Appeal No. 1255 of 1999; order dated September 23, 2014] in 2014, PUCL had challenged 99 encounters by Mumbai Police between 1995 and 1997 and sought guidelines on procedure to following in investigating police encounters. The court issued the following guidelines which are not just applicable in case of death in encounters but also grievous injuries caused during such encounters (the guidelines are abridged):

(1) Whenever the police is in receipt of any intelligence or tip-off regarding criminal movements or activities pertaining to the commission of grave criminal offence, it shall be reduced into writing in some form (preferably into case diary) or in some electronic form.

(2) If pursuant to the tip-off or receipt of any intelligence, as above, encounter takes place and firearm is used by the police party and as a result of that, death occurs, an FIR to that effect shall be registered and the same shall be forwarded to the court under Section 157 of the Code without any delay.

(3) An independent investigation into the incident/encounter shall be conducted by the CID or police team of another police station under the supervision of a senior officer which will identify the victim, recover evidence, determine the cause of death, ensure fingerprints of victim are sent for analysis, ensure that post mortem is conducted by two doctors of district hospital and the same should be video graphed.

(4) A Magisterial inquiry under Section 176 of the Code must invariably be held in all cases of death which occur in the course of police firing and a report thereof must be sent to Judicial Magistrate having jurisdiction under Section 190 of the Code.

5) The involvement of NHRC is not necessary unless there is serious doubt about independent and impartial investigation. However, information of the incident to be sent to NHRC or the State Commission.

(6) The injured criminal/victim should be provided medical aid and his/her statement recorded by the Magistrate or Medical Officer with certificate of fitness.
(7) It should be ensured that there is no delay in sending FIR, diary entries, panchnamas, sketch, etc., to the concerned Court.

(8) After full investigation into the incident, the report should be sent to the competent court under Section 173 of the Code. The trial, pursuant to the chargesheet submitted by the Investigating Officer, must be concluded expeditiously.

(9) In the event of death, the next of kin of the alleged criminal/victim must be informed at the earliest.

(10) Six monthly statements of all cases where deaths have occurred in police firing must be sent to NHRC by DGPs.

(11) If on the conclusion of investigation the materials/evidence having come on record show that death had occurred by use of firearm amounting to offence under the IPC, disciplinary action against such officer must be promptly initiated and he be placed under suspension.

(12) As regards compensation to be granted to the dependants of the victim who suffered death in a police encounter, the scheme provided under Section 357-A of the Code must be applied.

(13) The police officer(s) concerned must surrender his/her weapons for forensic and ballistic analysis, including any other material, as required by the investigating team, subject to the rights under Article 20 of the Constitution.

(14) An intimation about the incident must also be sent to the police officer's family and should the family need services of a lawyer / counselling, same must be offered.

(15) No out-of-turn promotion or instant gallantry rewards shall be bestowed on the concerned officers soon after the occurrence. It must be ensured at all costs that such rewards are given/recommended only when the gallantry of the concerned officers is established beyond doubt.

(16) If the family of the victim finds that the above procedure has not been followed or there exists a pattern of abuse or lack of independent investigation or impartiality by any of the functionaries as above mentioned, it may make a complaint to the Sessions Judge having territorial jurisdiction over the place of incident.

Besides the NHRC has laid down specific guidelines in cases of deaths caused in Police action:

A. When the police officer in charge of a police station receives information about death in an encounter with the police, he shall enter that information in the appropriate/ register.

B. Where the police officers belonging to the same police station are members of the encounter party, whose action resulted in death, it is desirable that such cases are made over for investigation to some other independent investigation agency, such as State CBCID.
C. Whenever a specific complaint is made against the police alleging commission of a criminal act on their part, which makes out a cognizable case of culpable homicide, an FIR to this effect must be registered under appropriate sections of the IPC. Such case shall be investigated by State CBCID or any other specialized investigation agency.

D. A magisterial enquiry must be held in all cases of death which occurs in the course of police action, as expeditiously as possible, preferably, within three months. The relatives of the deceased, eye witnesses having information of the circumstances leading to encounter, police station records etc. must be examined while conducting such enquiry.

E. Prompt prosecution and disciplinary action must be initiated against all delinquent officers found guilty in the magisterial enquiry/police investigation.

F. No out-of-turn promotion or instant gallantry rewards shall be bestowed on the concerned officers soon after the occurrence. It must be ensured at all costs that such rewards are given/recommended only when the gallantry of the concerned officer is established beyond doubt.

G. (a) All cases of deaths in police action in the states shall be reported to the Commission by the Senior Superintendent of Police/Superintendent of Police of the District within 48 hours of such death in the following format:

1. Date and place of occurrence
2. Police station, district
3. Circumstances leading to death:
   (i) Self-defence in encounter
   (ii) In course of dispersal of unlawful assembly
   (iii) In the course of effecting arrest
   (iv) Any other circumstances
4. Brief facts of the incident
5. Criminal case No.
6. Investigating agency

(b) A second report must be sent in all cases of death in police action in the state by the Sr. Superintendent of Police/Superintendent of Police to the commission within three months providing following information:

1. Post mortem report
2. Inquest report
3. Findings of the magisterial enquiry/enquiry by senior officers disclosing:
(i) Names and designation of police official, if found responsible for the death:

(ii) Whether use of force was justified and action taken was lawful:

(iii) Result of the forensic examination of 'handwash' of the deceased to ascertain the presence of residue of gun powder to justify exercise of right of self defence; and

(iv) Report of the Ballistic Expert on examination of the weapons alleged to have been used by the deceased and his companions.

Conclusion

Despite judicial strictures and some guidelines, such politically induced crimes by men and women in uniform, continue with societal sanction and approbation. The law, too is not clear and offers escape routes for trigger happy policemen. Such practices signify nothing less than a complete subversion of the rule of law.
The Print

‘No dust marks, empty pistol’: Retd IPS seeks NHRC probe into Asad-Ghulam ‘encounter’ by UP STF


In letter to NHRC, IPS (retd) Amitabh Thakur has raised 12 points of suspicion over 'encounter killing' of Atiq Ahmed’s son Asad & his aide Ghulam.

Lucknow: Amid the Opposition’s uproar over ‘encounter’ killings in Uttar Pradesh, activist and retired IPS officer Amitabh Thakur has written to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), alleging discrepancies in the sequence of events as narrated by the state police and pictures from the spot in Jhansi where Atiq Ahmed’s son Asad and his accomplice Ghulam Mohammed were killed in a ‘police encounter’ Thursday.

The UP special task force (STF) had termed it “one-of-the-few operations” in which it used all its might to trace the accused. Three separate First Information Reports (FIRs) were lodged by DSP (STF) Navendu Kumar against Asad and Ghulam late Thursday night.

While police have filed one detailed FIR against Asad and Ghulam, two separate identical FIRs were also filed against each of the two under sections of the Arms Act owing to the recovery of pistols from them at the time of the ‘encounter’. ThePrint has a copy of all the FIRs.

Pointing out 12 points of “suspicion” and discrepancies in the FIRs and the photographs of the incident that have emerged, Thakur has also called for a thorough probe into the alleged encounters. ThePrint has a copy of his letter to the NHRC.

In his complaint to the human rights body, Thakur said suspicion arises from a comparison between the FIRs, and the photographs of the deceased released by the STF. “As per established law, nobody is allowed to kill someone and anyone can be killed only through legal procedure. Nobody can be killed merely calling him a heinous criminal. If the situation is not controlled, the entire system will become anarchic,” he wrote.

He said while the police claimed that the accused were hiding in the bushes, the site was an open spot without any bushes, contrary to the description in the FIR. “There is no evidence of slipping or sliding and there are no dust marks on the tyres of the bike found at the spot,” he wrote.

Thakur also questioned the timing of the incident, stating that while the FIR says the accused had shown signs of life at the time of being transported to a hospital in the afternoon, TV channels “had already broken the news of their deaths at 1 pm”.

Asked to comment on the allegations, STF sources told ThePrint that Thakur was a regular in making such complaints and was not taken seriously even when he was in service.
Killed on the spot or died in hospital?

Thakur contended that while the FIR claimed both Asad and Ghulam were alive when the encounter ended, and were writhing in pain, “it is clear from pictures that Asad and Ghulam had been killed at the spot and the pictures were of dead bodies and not of two persons writhing in pain”.

“In one photo, Asad’s body can be seen lying below the handle of a bike which is not possible in any situation because if a person falls, he cannot land under a bike which is already lying on the ground…his body should be above the handle… The way Asad’s body has been shown…gives rise to suspicion,” he added.

Thakur further said that in the same photo, the way a pistol is shown in Asad’s closed fist, it doesn’t seem to be in consonance with the medico-legal principles according to which, as soon as someone collapses, “the pistol will fall from his hand”.

“He (Ghulam) had fresh blood in the back. Rigor mortis had not set in by that time which means they died about one-two hours before they arrived. An X-ray was conducted on the whole body,” he had added.

Rigor mortis, a postmortem change resulting in stiffening of body muscles, helps medical professionals estimate the time of death and also ascertain whether the body was moved.

What FIRs against Asad, Ghulam say

In the first FIR lodged against both Asad and Mohammed Ghulam in Badagaon police station of Jhansi at 11.22 pm Thursday, the DSP has alleged that they had information about Guddu Muslim (one of the shooters in the Umesh Pal case) having stayed at the
house of one Satish Pandey in Parichha power plant area but he fled before police arrived.

“Information was received about the presence of the accused Asad and Ghulam in Jhansi and its suburbs after which 13 STF officers in two teams travelled to the area in two vehicles,” it said.

It added that an informer told the team that Asad and Ghulam were spotted in the Chirgaon area late Wednesday and were likely to still be there. They were then informed that the duo had moved towards Parichha from Chirgaon on a red-black Discover bike with a missing number plate.

The FIR said the duo were sighted 100 metres before Parichha and sped away on a kutcha road when the police tried to stop them. “Both the teams surrounded the accused, warning them and tried to stop them… At about 1.5 metres from the spot, the bike slipped and fell in the bushes and both started firing at the policemen after hurling abuses at us,” it said.

“…considering the indiscriminate firing from their side, the police team resorted to firing in self defence,” said the FIR lodged under IPC section 307 (attempt to murder).

It added that the team approached the accused when the latter stopped firing and “saw that they were writhing in pain”. And that the men were “identified as Asad Ahmed and Mohammed Ghulam from the photographs which had gone viral on media channels”.

“Since there were signs of life in both the accused,” the FIR said, they were taken to a hospital in two separate ambulances. “Later, when we went to the Jhansi medical college to check, they were dead,” it added.

Speaking to media persons Friday, ADG (STF) Amitabh Yash defended the encounters, and said the agency had put all its might into cracking the case and had engaged several of its teams to track the accused. Elaborating on the STF’s probe, he said that “it was a one-of-the-few operations wherein the STF had thrust its entire might and before this, (such an action) has taken place in very few cases”.

“It was an important case because the murder committed by the mafia was an attack on the roots of the criminal justice system because if witnesses are killed like this, no person will stand to testify and the entire criminal justice system will collapse,” he said.

BJP leader Umesh Pal was one of the witnesses in the daylight murder of BSP MLA Raju Pal who was allegedly gunned down by Atiq’s men on 25 January 2005. However, Umesh had turned hostile in court during his testimony and was later dropped from the list of the witnesses after the CBI took over the probe in 2016 and found him “unreliable”.

On 24 February this year, Umesh Pal was shot dead in broad daylight after at least seven persons arrived in multiple vehicles and opened fire at him.
Opposition attacks

Meanwhile, the Opposition continues to raise the issue of “fake encounters” and custodial deaths in UP. Speaking to the media in Indore Friday, Samajwadi Party (SP) chief and former chief minister Akhilesh Yadav said Uttar Pradesh was number one in fake encounters and custodial deaths, and had received several notices from the NHRC in this regard.

Citing previous ‘encounter killings’ in the state, he said, “We believe in the court. A court can take suo motu cognizance and families should also approach the court in case they feel that an encounter is fake.”

He further dared the government to shoot the persons involved in the death of a mother-daughter duo in Kanpur. “You are looking at caste and religion here…in which direction, are you taking the country? They want to divide the society and rule,” he said.

Pramila Dixit (44) and her 20-year-old daughter Neha were charred to death shortly after a fire broke out in their shanty where a team of local administration and Kanpur police had reached in Mandauli village of Kanpur Dehat following an order from the Maitha SDM in February this year.

The deaths had stirred a political row even as the Kanpur police booked 12 named persons, including the local SDM, SHO, and other officials, and 12-15 cops for murder in connection with the incident, according to media reports.

Meanwhile, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi said in Hyderabad Friday that though he didn’t support any mafia or criminal, he was always opposed to encounters. “What is the difference between law enforcement agencies and criminals then?” he asked.

Reports also quoted him as asking, “Was the killer of Mahatma Gandhi killed or sent to jail? Did you shoot him in an encounter?”

(Edited by Smriti Sinha)
Death of two sanitation workers in Patna: NHRC seeks reply in 6 weeks

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PATNA: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued notices to the state chief secretary, Patna’s SSP and the commissioner, Patna municipal corporation, over media reports regarding death of two sanitation workers during cleaning an underground drain in Transport Nagar area on Tuesday.

In the notice, which was issued Thursday late evening, the commission has directed the officials to file a detailed report on the incident within six weeks. Citing the reports, the NHRC said that the employer company, engaged in execution of a Namami Gange Mission project, did not provide safety gear to the labourers before venturing in the drain. Two sanitation workers, Ranjan Ravidas (24) and Munna Razak (23), reportedly died after inhaling toxic gases inside a sewer under the much-hyped Namami Gange project on Tuesday. The labourers were cleaning a sewer at Ward No. 56, near Zakariyapur, under the Ramkrishna Police Station area, said a police officer. The victims were among dozen-odd workers hired as daily wagers by the company.

In the statement, NHRC directed the officials to include the details of the FIR registered in the matter, departmental action taken against the responsible people, and relief and rehabilitation provided to the aggrieved families by the state authorities.

A senior officer of the NHRC said that the commission has been batting for a complete ban on cleaning hazardous drains and sewer pipes without proper safety gears. “An advisory to this effect has been issued to the Centre, states, and local authorities in this regard on September 24, 2021,” he added.

In a similar incident, two workers had lost their lives while cleaning a sewage drain in Beur area in Patna in May 2021. Bihar urban infrastructure development corporation (Buidco) managing director Dharmendra Singh, under whose supervision Namami Gange project is being implemented in Bihar, could not be contacted for his comments.
Nagaland civilian killings: After setback, families ask who will help them now

While the six died on the spot, two survived. Seven more civilians and a security personnel died in retaliatory violence that followed.

A sense of helplessness and despair has gripped Chemwang Konyak since Friday.

On December 4, 2021, his son, Shomwang, was among six miners who were killed when the Indian Army’s 21 Para Special Force opened fire at a pick-up truck in Nagaland’s Oting village, mistaking its occupants for insurgents of the banned National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang-Yung Aung) group.

While the six died on the spot, two survived. Seven more civilians and a security personnel died in retaliatory violence that followed.

The incident, which caused public outrage in Nagaland, led the National Human Rights Commission to take suo motu cognizance of the killings, and the state government to set up a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to “facilitate free and fair investigation” in the case. Last June, based on the SIT’s report, the state police filed a chargesheet accusing the 30 Army men, including a commander of Major rank, of “attempt to murder”.

However, less than a year later, the Union Ministry of Defence denied sanction to prosecute the 30 security men, a statement from the Nagaland police said on Thursday. Without the prosecution sanction from the Centre, a precondition to initiate action against security personnel in areas under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), the legal process against the Army men cannot proceed further. The Army’s separate Court of Inquiry is complete, but it is yet to decide on the action forward.

On Saturday, Eastern Army Commander Lt Gen RP Kalita told reporters in Guwahati that it was an "unfortunate incident". "Unfortunately, because of the stay order passed by the Supreme Court, the proceedings have been stayed completely…that’s where the situation as far as the army inquiry is concerned," he said.

He also reportedly said that the Army had “analysed” the mistakes in the Oting operation, and taken a “comprehensive review of the conduct of operation in those areas”. He said that the Army was reviewing amended Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) put in place for counter-insurgency operations in the Northeast following the Oting incident.
For 58-year-old Chemwang, who has long been battling a form of skin cancer, the news has been shattering. “They had promised us justice… promised us that those who killed my son would be punished,” he says over the phone from Oting, in Nagaland’s Mon district, home to the Konyak tribe. The monetary compensation and government job the state had announced did reach Shomwang’s family, but his father says “nothing can replace my son. We still want those involved to be punished.”

However, Chemwang says that “neither the state government nor civil society organisations” are helping them get justice. “We are helpless.”

Adds Chongmei Konyak, Oting resident and former Army Supply Corps soldier who was injured in the retaliatory violence: “There was a lot of noise in the beginning, our leaders were rallying behind us, but now everything is quiet.”

In the weeks following the incident, Nagaland was swept by public protests, especially in the state’s eastern districts, where Oting falls. The influential Eastern Nagaland People’s Organisation, which represents the Eastern Naga tribes, as well as the Konyak Union, the Konyak tribe’s representative body, had said they won’t back down till justice was delivered and AFSPA was removed.

However, many say that the seething anger has dissipated to a large extent. Locals allege that the civil society organisations, which mediated with the government on behalf of the villagers, were not pursuing the matter as actively as they had before. The Indian Express reached out to both the Eastern Nagaland People’s Organisation and the Konyak Union. The organisations’ office bearers refused to comment, and said that they were “discussing the matter”.

In this vacuum, the villages of Oting feel especially “betrayed”. “It is sad because our leaders are not discussing it anymore. Most of the affected people are poor and uneducated. The survivors are still suffering. They cannot follow up the case on their own, they will need guidance. But whom do they turn to?” asks Keapwang Konyak, the president of the Oting Students’ Union, and friend of some killed in the incident.

A case in point is Kumwang Konyak, the brother of Yeihwang, one of the two survivors of the ambush. The incident maimed Yeihwang, and in the year since, he has lived as a “vegetable”, his family says. “My brother can barely walk, we are barely able to make ends meet… but after the initial compensation from the government, we have got nothing,” says Kumwang, a farmer. He adds that he had no idea about the prosecution sanction being denied. “We are just trying to survive.”

In Mon town, Tingshen Konyak, a 32-year-old who was injured in the clashes following the ambush, says he was “not surprised” and had lost hope for justice long back. “But I thought the government would at least help us with other livelihood options,” he says. Tingshen’s right thumb had to be amputated because of a gunshot injury.
The Indian Express reached out to several senior leaders of the ruling Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP)-BJP coalition government that recently came to power for a second term in Nagaland, but none officially commented. Asked if the state government had issued any directions to follow up with the Centre regarding the denial of prosecution sanction, Nagaland Director General of Police Rupin Sharma said that he had received none.

The Nagaland Congress hit out at the government for not pursuing the matter. “There is no political will… the BJP may talk of peace but they have not achieved anything,” said K Therie, former Nagaland Congress President. “Justice looks far-fetched… the living have failed the dead once again,” added Gk Zhimomi, also of the Congress.

In response, Imkong Imchen, BJP MLA from Nagaland, said that the state government was “helpless” because areas under the AFSPA fall under the “mandate of the Union government”. NDPP minister KG Kenye, who holds the portfolio for Parliamentary Affairs, said that one cannot “blame the Centre or the state authority”, since the Supreme Court had taken up the matter. In July 2022, the apex court had stayed proceedings on the FIR and the report of the SIT, invoking the immunity the AFSPA offers to the security forces. This was in response to the petition filed by the wife of the Army officer who had led the operation. The petitioner had asked for a stay on the chargesheet, citing non-sanction of prosecution by the Department of Military Affairs.

Kenye said, while clarifying that he was speaking in his personal capacity, that he was “sure that the government would appeal to the Centre soon”. But, Nyawang Wangsha, who is the Mon district president of the BJP, said there was no point going to the “higher-ups” (state BJP leaders). “Nothing has been done, no compensation given to even help the injured survivors,” he points out.

However, despite that, some say the BJP has managed to remain on a good wicket. Following the incident, the Union Home ministry rolled back AFSPA in several areas in the northeast in April 2021. It did another, though minor, rollback in March this year.

But the party’s bigger political statement was appointing S Phangnon Konyak as its Rajya Sabha MP from Nagaland last March — Phangnon, the first woman to represent Nagaland in the Rajya Sabha, hails from Oting. A BJP leader from Nagaland admitted that the “appeasement had helped”.

Chongmei Konyak, the former Army Supply Corps soldier, says that following the appointment, things became “political”, and many went “completely silent” on the matter.

He adds that until AFSPA is removed in its entirety, “nothing will change”. “The government announced that they are removing it from some areas… they may have but what is the point? We are still suffering because of it.”
The Print

‘Totally reduced to dust’: Atiq Ahmed on his life — from a dreaded gangster to MP, and then in jail

https://theprint.in/india/totally-reduced-to-dust-atiq-ahmed-on-his-life-from-a-dreaded-gangster-to-mp-and-then-in-jail/1521302/

Atiq Ahmed, the gangster-turned-politician who was first convicted only last month, despite 130-odd cases against him, was gunned down late Saturday night.

New Delhi: “I am totally reduced to dust, but please don’t trouble the women and children of my family now,” Uttar Pradesh’s gangster-politician Atiq Ahmed told reporters from inside a police van Wednesday.

His words weren’t quite off the mark as late Saturday, the 62-year-old and his brother Ashraf were gunned down by three armed men while they were being taken for a medical checkup in UP’s Prayagraj. The incident occurred just when the brothers were giving a statement to the media.

Atiq, a former legislator, was married to Shaista Praveen, also his co-accused in Umesh Pal murder case this year. They had five sons — one of whom, Asad, was killed in an ‘encounter’ along with an aide, Ghulam, last Thursday.

Political life

Atiq shot into political limelight in 1989 when he first became an MLA from the erstwhile Allahabad (W) in Uttar Pradesh. He went on to win the seat for five consecutive terms and moving on to the 14th Lok Sabha as a Samajwadi Party candidate in 2004. It was the same year that Raju Pal won the state assembly bypoll from Allahabad (W), the seat vacated by Atiq from where the latter fielded his brother Asad. However, Pal won the election.

Pal was shot dead in early 2005, and the seat fell vacant again. This time, Ashraf won the election against Pal’s wife Puja. While Ashraf was the prime accused in the murder, Atiq was a co-accused.

Once his LS term ended, Atiq tried to contest UP assembly elections in 2009 which he was allowed to contest as he hadn’t yet been convicted in any case. However, he had already been expelled by the SP, and with the BSP refusing him a ticket, Atiq contested on an Apna Dal ticket from Pratapgarh, only to lose.

He tried his luck again in 2012 on an Apna Dal ticket, this time from his bastion of Allahabad (W). While he filed his nomination from jail, and appealed for bail, judge after
judge refused to hear his case. Finally, when he did get out on bail for the elections, he lost to Raju Pal's wife, Puja.

The SP took him back in the fold in 2014 and Atiq fought the Lok Sabha election from Shrawasti. But lost again to the BJP candidate.

While Atiq was an accused in Pal's murder, it was the subsequent killing of a prime witness — who later turned hostile, allegedly because Atiq pressured him — Umesh Pal early this year that the state government turned its lens on Atiq all over again.

Criminal cases

Atiq was first accused of murder in 1979, when he was just 17. After years of active politics, Atiq's political graph took a steady decline and by 2014, SP’s Akhilesh Yadav had also begun distancing himself from the man because of his criminal record.

In 2016, Atiq and his aides allegedly assaulted the staff of Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences, purported videos of which went viral back then. Reports say the assault took place after two students were debarred from taking exams on being caught cheating.

The next year, the Allahabad High Court directed the police to arrest all the accused, which included Atiq. But he got a 14-day remand. Some reports say Atiq also contested against Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Varanasi in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections but secured only a handful of votes.

In 2018, businessman Mohit Jaiswal accused Atiq of assaulting him in Deoria jail. Jaiswal alleged that Atiq’s gang was trying to extort money from him. He alleged that he was taken to the jail when he did not relent, and beaten up. As the news spread, the state government shifted Atiq to Bareilly jail. He was later shifted to the Naini jail in Prayagraj.

The next year, the Supreme Court directed the UP government to transfer Atiq to Gujarat from Naini jail.

On 24 February this year, Umesh Pal, the prime witness in the Raju Pal murder, was attacked and killed along with his police guard who were shot dead in Uttar Pradesh’s Prayagraj. The police registered an FIR against Atiq Ahmed, his wife Sahista Parveen, their two sons, his younger brother Khalid Azim alias Ashraf, and others on February 25.

He was finally convicted in the 2006 Umesh Pal abduction case late last month and sentenced to life imprisonment. That was his first conviction in over 130 cases against him.

Last Tuesday, he was transferred from the Sabarmati jail to appear before the court in Uttar Pradesh’s Prayagraj. This, after the Supreme Court turned down his request to issue
some directions for his protection as there was threat to his life. The court said the state machinertzry would take care of the issue.

While securing his remand, the UP STF submitted in its chargesheet that Atiq confessed to having hatched the Umesh Pal murder conspiracy and had links with the ISI, but the gangster denied all of it in court, said his lawyers.

(With PTI inputs)

(Edited by Smriti Sinha)
Four dead after consuming spurious liquor in Bihar


Patna, Apr 15 (PTI) At least four people have died after allegedly consuming spurious liquor in East Champaran district of dry Bihar in the intervening night of Friday and Saturday, the police said.

The deaths took place in areas under Turkauliya and Paharpur police stations of East Champaran, the police said.

Seven persons have so far been detained by the police as part of the investigation into the incident, a Bihar police headquarters statement said here.

The dead have been identified as Tuntun Singh (35), Bhutan Manjhi (40), Chotu Paswan (25) and Ashok Paswan (45), the police said.

Family members of Tuntun Singh and Bhutan Manjhi have cremated their bodies, while the police have sent bodies of Chotu Paswan and Ashok Paswan for the post-mortem examination, the statement said.

“The district police is investigating the matter and trying to ascertain those involved in illegal liquor trade. Excise department officials are also probing the incident,” the Bihar police report said.

It is suspected that victims may have died after consuming spurious liquor. The exact cause of their death will be known after the post-mortem report, a senior police official said.

Unconfirmed reports said that several villagers are being treated in private hospitals in the adjacent districts, where they were rushed.

The sale and consumption of alcohol was banned in Bihar by the Nitish Kumar government in April 2016. However, incidents of smuggling of liquor continue to be reported from the state notwithstanding the ongoing drive against bootleggers.

In the last major hooch tragedy in December 2022 scores of people had died after consuming spurious liquor in Saran district.

The National Human Rights Commission issued notices to Bihar government and other concerned authorities in connection with the Saran hooch tragedy and its reports blamed the administration for the deaths. PTI PKD KK KK KK
Bihar: 20 Dead After Consuming Spurious Liquor In Motihari District


Earlier in December 2022, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) blamed the authorities in Bihar for suppressing the death toll in the hooch tragedy in Saran and Siwan districts, stating that at least 77 people had died in the incident as against the government's figure of 42 deaths.

At least 20 people have died in the last 24 hours after allegedly consuming spurious liquor in Motihari district between Friday night and Saturday afternoon, the police said.

According to reports, the deaths were reported in Lakshmipur village of Turkoulia police station, followed by Harsiddhi, Paharpur and Sugauli areas. "It is a sad incident. I have asked for all information on it," Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said after the tragedy.
उत्तर प्रदेश में हो रही हैं "फर्जी मुठभेड" : अतीक़ के बेटे की मौत के बाद अखिलेश यादव का दावा


मुठभेड़ के बारे में पूछे जाने पर यादव ने संवाददाताओं से कहा कि यह पहली बार नहीं है जब ‘फर्जी’ मुठभेड़ों को लेकर उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार पर सवाल उठे हैं।

माफिया अतीक अहमद के बेटे असद की मुठभेड़ में मौत के संबंध में समाजवादी पार्टी (सपा) के अध्यक्ष अखिलेश यादव ने बुखारस में कहा कि उन्होंने अतीक अहमद प्रभाग की इस दीवार से बाहर निकले। ऐसे समय में फर्जी मुठभेड़ों के सामने पार्टी के कई नोटिस दिए गए।

यादव ने मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यनाथ की विधानसभा में की गई उनकी टिप्पणी ‘माफिया’ को धूल में मिला देंगे’ को लेकर भी कठायित किया। उन्होंने कहा कि इस तरह के ‘फिल्मी संवाद’ बोलने वालों की सवाल में कोई विश्वास नहीं है।

अधिकारियों ने लखनऊ में कहा कि अतीक अहमद का बेटा असद और एक शूटर बुखारस में हुई दीवार की मौत के पास उत्तर प्रदेश पुलिस के साथ मुठभेड़ में मारे गए। दोनों उमेश पाल हत्याकांड में वांछित थे। इस कथित मुठभेड़ तब हुई जब अतीक अहमद प्रभाग की एक अदालत में था जहां उसे उमेश पाल की हत्या के सिद्धांत में मुख्य व्याख्यातम नज़रिया के सामने पेश किया गया था।

मुठभेड़ के बारे में पूछे जाने पर यादव ने संवाददाताओं से कहा कि यह पहली बार नहीं है जब ‘फर्जी’ मुठभेड़ों को लेकर उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार पर सवाल उठे हैं।

कानपुर के पास जुलाई 2020 में एक मुठभेड़ में गैंगस्टर विकास दुबे के मारे जाने की घटना का परिक्षण ने सिलसिले में मुख्य व्याख्यातम मज़िस्ट्रेट के सामने पेश किया गया था।

उत्तर प्रदेश पुलिस ने तब दावा किया था कि दुबे को गोली मार दी गई थी जब वह उजैन से कार से लाने के दौरान कानपुर के बाहरी इलाके में वाहन पलट जाने के बाद भागने की कोशिश कर रहा था।

कानपुर में पुलिस ने विकास दुबे की मौत के मामले में फर्जी की मौत के बाद भाग लेने की कोशिश कर रहा था।

सपा प्रमुख ने कहा, “हाल में कानपुर में जब एक मां-बेटी की झोपड़ी पर बुलडोजर चलकर आया लगा दी गई, तो दोनों की जान चली गई। इसी तरह, एक फर्जी मुठभेड़ 2019 में पुष्पेंद्र यादव मारा गया था। कानपुर में पुलिस हिरासत में एक शख्स की मौत हो गई।”

यादव ने आरोप लगाया, “बलिया में भाजपा कार्यकर्ताओं ने एक होनहार छात्र नेता की हत्या कर दी। बलिया में ही भाजपा विधायकों ने एक व्यापारी पर इस कदर दबाव डाला कि उसकी जान चली गई।”
क्या अतीक अहमद के बेटे को फर्जी मुठभेड़ में मार दिया गया, यह पूछे जाने पर यादव ने कहा कि राज्य में “फर्जी” मुठभेड़ों को लेकर उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार पर बार-बार सवाल उठाए गए हैं। उन्होंने दावा किया, “एनएचआरसी ने उप प्रशासन की (मुठभेड़ जैसी पुलिस कार्रवाई को लेकर) सबसे ज्यादा नोटिस दिए हैं। देश में हिरासत में सबसे ज्यादा मौतें उत्तर प्रदेश में होती हैं।”

अखिलेश यादव, कांग्रेस के दिवंगत नेता और मध्य प्रदेश के पूर्व उपमुख्यमंत्री सुभाष यादव को श्रद्धांजलि देने खरगोन जिले के बोरावन कस्बे आए थे।

अपने टेलीग्राम ऐप पर जनवादी नर्जररये से ताजा खबरें, समसामयिक मामलों की चर्चा और विश्लेषण, प्रतिरोध, आंदोलन और अन्य विश्लेषणात्मक वीडियो प्राप्त करें। न्यूजखिक के टेलीग्राम चैनल की सदस्यता लें और हमारी वेबसाइट पर प्रकाशित हर न्यूज़ स्टोरी का रीयल-टाइम अपडेट प्राप्त करें।
जंता से रिश्ता

मोतिहारी जिले में जहरीली शराब पीने से 20 की मौत


बिहार खबर मोतिहारी जिले में शुक्रवार रात से शनिवार दोपहर के बीच कथित तौर पर जहरीली शराब पीने से पिछले 24 घंटो में कम से कम 20 लोगों की मौत हो गई है। खबरों के मुताबिक, तुरकोलिया थाने के लक्ष्मीपुर गांव, उसके बाद हरसिद्धि, पहाड़पुर और सुगीली इत्याद में मौत की सूचना मिली है। हादसे के बाद बिहार के मुख्यमंत्री नीतीश कुमार ने कहा, "यह एक दुर्भाग्य घटना है। मैंने इस पर पूरी जानकारी मांगी है।" एनडीटीवी की एक रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक, नकली शराब से भेरे एक टैंक को मोतिहारी लाया गया और स्थानीय व्यापारियों के बीच वितरित किया गया, जिससे यह हादसा हुआ।

जहरीली शराब नास्ती द्वारा भरे अता इससे बहस के तौर पर डिसंबर 2022 में, राज्य मानवाधिकार आयोग (एनएचआरसी) ने सारण और सीवान जिलों में जहरीली शराब नास्ती में "मृतकों की संख्या की कम करने" के लिए बिहार के अधिकारियों को दोषी ठहराया था, जिसमें कहा गया था कि इस घटना में कम से कम 77 लोग मारे गए थे, जबकि सरकार के 42 मौतों का आंकडा।

उपमुख्यमंत्री तेजस्वी यादव के साथ मौतों को लेकर राज्य विधानसभा में एक राजनीतिक नारा भी सामने आया, जिसमें आरोप लगाया गया कि एनएचआरसी का दौरा भाजपा के नेतृत्व वाले केंद्र द्वारा राज्य सरकार को बदनाम करने के लिए भ्राम कर रहा था। बिहार का आबकारी अधिनियम 2016 में राज्य सरकार द्वारा प्रतिबंधित किए जाने के बाद से किसी भी नशीले शराब के निर्माण, बोतलिंग, वितरण, परिवहन, संग्रह, भंडारण, बिक्री, कब्जे या खरीद पर पूरी तरह से प्रतिबंध लगा है।

नीतीश के नेतृत्व वाली सत्यार्थ जद (यू) ने जोर देकर कहा था कि सरकार अपराध में शामिल लोगों को मुआवजा नहीं दे सकती है। मद्यनिषेध मंत्री सुनील कुमार ने कहा था, "न तो आईपीसी और न ही सीआरपीसी किसी अपराध के आरोपी व्यक्ति को मुआवजा का प्रावधान करता है। बिहार में मद्यनिषेध कानून के तहत किसी भी प्रकार की शराब का सेवन अवैध है।" नीतीश ने बिहार विधानसभा में अपने आचरण और अपनी सार्वजनिक टिप्पणी के लिए आलोचना को भी आर्थिकि न किया है जिसमें उन्होंने कहा था कि अगर आप शराब पीएंगे तो मरना स्वाभाविक है। (पीटीआई से इनपुट्स के साथ)
पूर्वी चंपारण में जहरिली शराब पीने से चार लोगों की मौत

पटना (भारत).

बिहार के पूर्वी चंपारण जिले के दुर्वाकालिया और पहाड़पुर धाना क्षेत्र में शुक्रवार और शनिवार की दर्शनीय रत करीब तीन दिन जहरिली शराब पीने से कम से कम चार लोगों की मौत हो गई है। पुलिस ने यह जानकारी दी। उल्लेखनीय है कि बिहार में अप्रैल 2016 से हो चुकी है इस पूर्वी शराबवंदी लागू है।

पुलिस ने बताया कि मृतकों की पहचान दुनून सिंह (35), भूतम मंडी (40), छोटे पासवान (25) और अशोक पासवान (45) के रूप में हुई है। बिहार पुलिस ने बताया कि इन तीनों की निगाहें शराब पीने से जड़ी हुई है। उन्हें जानकारी दी गई है।

बयान में कहा गया है कि अभियंता जहाँ जा रही है कि शुक्रवार और शनिवार के दौरान तीन जहरिली शराब पीने से मृत्यु हो गई। एक बहिष्कारित पुलिस अधिकारी ने कहा कि मौत का ठीक समय और स्थान के बाद हो गया।

अनुपम ख़तोरी के निश्चिह्न कई अन्य प्राचीनों का अतिक्रमण के बेहतर निर्देश नहीं कराया गया है। अप्रैल 2016 में नीतिक शुभारूढ़ सचिव द्वारा बिहार में शराब की बैठक और घेराबंधन पर विचार पर चर्चा की गई थी।

हालांकि, राजस्थान में जहरिली मशक्कल पर रोकान का ध्यान रखना अभी बहुत अत्यंत आवश्यक है। राजस्थान में जहरिली शराब से बड़ी संख्या में लोगों की मौत हुई है।
Death of two sanitation workers in Patna: NHRC seeks reply in 6 weeks

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PATNA: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued notices to the state chief secretary, Patna’s SSP and the commissioner, Patna municipal corporation, over media reports regarding death of two sanitation workers during cleaning an underground drain in Transport Nagar area on Tuesday.

In the notice, which was issued Thursday late evening, the commission has directed the officials to file a detailed report on the incident within six weeks. Citing the reports, the NHRC said that the employer company, engaged in execution of a Namami Gange Mission project, did not provide safety gear to the labourers before venturing in the drain. Two sanitation workers, Ranjan Ravidas (24) and Munna Razak (23), reportedly died after inhaling toxic gases inside a sewer under the much-hyped Namami Gange project on Tuesday. The labourers were cleaning a sewer at Ward No. 56, near Zakariyapur, under the Ramkrishna Police Station area, said a police officer. The victims were among dozen-odd workers hired as daily wagers by the company.

In the statement, NHRC directed the officials to include the details of the FIR registered in the matter, departmental action taken against the responsible people, and relief and rehabilitation provided to the aggrieved families by the state authorities.

A senior officer of the NHRC said that the commission has been batting for a complete ban on cleaning hazardous drains and sewer pipes without proper safety gears. “An advisory to this effect has been issued to the Centre, states, and local authorities in this regard on September 24, 2021,” he added.

In a similar incident, two workers had lost their lives while cleaning a sewage drain in Beur area in Patna in May 2021.

Bihar urban infrastructure development corporation (Buidco) managing director Dharmendra Singh, under whose supervision Namami Gange project is being implemented in Bihar, could not be contacted for his comments.
जहरीली शराबकांड के मुद्दे पर सियासी बयानबाजी हुई तेज

राज्य में शराबबंदी पूरी तरह फेल : पशुपति पारस

पूर्वी चंपारण में छिपाये जा रहे जहरीली शराब से मौत के आंकड़े : सुशील मोदी

राज्य लूपर, पटना : राज्यसभा सदस्य सुशील मोदी ने कहा कि छुपस्कर राज्य में अब पूर्वी चंपारण में जहरीली शराब से मरने वालों का आंकड़ा 4-4 लाख है। उन्होंने कहा कि जहरीली शराब से मरने वालों की संख्या 4-4 लाख है। यह संख्या मुआवजा देने के लिए सरकार को कठिनाई पड़ सकती है।

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Non-bailable warrant against Manmode


TNN | Apr 15, 2023, 08.20 AM IST

Nagpur: Censuring the city police for not producing Pramod Manmode in court in connection with a ₹3.5 crore Nirmal Urban Cooperative Bank fraud case, the judicial magistrate first class (JMFC) on Thursday issued a non-bailable warrant against the builder-cum-politician.

The court directed the cops to produce Manmode in the court on March 26. Earlier, the court had adjourned the case nine times, as the police failed to produce Manmode.

In their 43-page chargesheet submitted before JMFC, the Nandanwan police had named Manmode for allegedly duping Mukesh Barbate and Kunal Yelne. Initially, the city police did not entertain complaints filed against Manmode. It only acted after one of the complainants, Yelne, approached the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

As per police, Sachin Bomble, the manager at Nirmal Urban Cooperative Bank’s branch in Kamptee, had reportedly increased the cash credit limit against loans of several account holders and misappropriated ₹3.5 crore.

After committing the fraud, Bomble in connivance with Nirmal Ujjwal Credit Cooperative Society’s secretary Manmode had hatched a conspiracy and lured complainant Yelne and Barbate to mortgage their properties with the society. Against the transaction, they got a ₹5 crore loan (of ₹2.5 crore each approved from the society).

Manmode asked the complainants to help him in settling a bank fraud, which he claimed was committed by Bomble. As Yelne and Barbate had applied for loans, Manmode urged them to increase the loan amount. Gaining the duo’s confidence, he also made them mortgage six of their other properties.

The bank then transferred the ₹2.5 crore loan to Yelne’s account. Of this, ₹1.51 crore was reportedly transferred into Bomble’s account. Similarly, ₹1.68 crore was transferred from Barbate’s account into Bomble’s account. Police booked Manmode and Bomble under Sections 420, 409, 109, 120 (B) of the IPC.
बिहार : पूर्वी चंपारण में जहरीली शराब पीने से चार लोगों की मौत

पटना, 15 अप्रैल (भाषा) बिहार के पूर्वी चंपारण जिले के तुरकौलिया और पहाड़पुर थाना क्षेत्र में शुक्वर और शाविवार की दरम्यान रात कबथत तौर पर जहरीली शराब पीने से कम से कम चार लोगों की मौत हो गयी। पुलिस ने यह जानकारी दी।

उल्लेखनीय है कि बिहार में अप्रैल 2016 से ही पूर्ण शराबपंदी लागू है।

पुलिस ने बताया कि मृतकों की पहचान टुनटुन सिंह (35), भूटान मांझी (40), छोटू पासर्वान (25) और अशोक पासर्वान (45) के रूप में हुई है।

बिहार पुलिस मुख्यालय द्वारा जारी एक बयान के अनुसार, 'टुनटुन सिंह और भूटान मांझी के परिवार के सदस्यों ने जहां उनके शवों का अंतिम संस्कार किया, वहाँ पुलिस ने छोटू पासर्वान और अशोक पासर्वान के शवों को पोस्टमॉटर्म के लिए भेज दिया है।'

बयान में कहा गया है कि आशंका जताई जा रही है कि शुकवर और शाविवार की दरम्यान रात जहरीली शराब पीने से चारों की मौत हुई होगी।

एक वरिष्ठ पुलिस अधिकारी ने कहा कि मौत का सही कारण पोस्टमॉटर्म रिपोर्ट आने के बाद ही होगी।

उन्होंने बताया कि जिला पुलिस मामले की जांच कर रही है और उन लोगों का पता लगाने की कोशिश कर रही है जो कथित शराब के अंदर कारोबार में शामिल थे। घटना की जांच के तहत पुलिस ने अब तक सात लोगों को हिरासत में लिया है।

आबादी विभाग के अधिकारी भी घटना की जांच कर रहे हैं।

अपूर्व खबरों के मुताबिक कई अन्य ग्रामीणों को आसपास के जिलों के कुछ निजी अस्पतालों में भर्ती कराया गया है।

अप्रैल 2016 में नीतीश कुमार सरकार द्वारा बिहार में शराब की बिक्री और खपत पर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया गया था।

हालांकि, राज्य में शराब तस्करों के खिलाफ चल रहे अभियान के बावजूद, बिहार में शराब की तस्करी खबरें आती रहीं हैं।

गौरतंब संभाल है कि सारण जिले में दिसंबर 2022 में जहरीली शराब से बड़ी संख्या में लोगों की मौत हुई थी।
राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग (एनएचआरसी) ने भी सारण जहरीली त्रासदी के संबंध में बिहार सरकार और अन्य संबंधित अधिकारियों को नोटिस जारी किया है।

एनएचआरसी की रिपोर्ट में मौतों के लिए प्रशासन को जिम्मेदार ठहराया गया है।

भाषा अनवर थीरज