

Police register a case against the Indian Orthodox Church members for starting riots

Nearly 3,000 people accused in the case

Thiruvananthapuram: The city police have registered a case of rioting, unlawful assembly, assaulting police officers and destruction of public property in connection with the violence involving the Indian Orthodox Church protestors in front of the Secretariat on Tuesday afternoon.

Nearly 3,000 people have been mentioned as accused in the case registered at Cantonment police station. A senior official said the main troublemakers would be identified after verifying police video recordings and television news visuals of the incident.

At least seven policemen, including an Assistant Commissioner, were injured in the violence. Scores of members of the Orthodox laity and priests sustained injuries in the police lathi-charge. The tension that gripped the central part of the city around 4.30 p.m. continued unabated for nearly three hours. Traffic was thrown out of gear. Normal vehicular traffic resumed only by 7.30 p.m. The Church leaders had told the police that the trouble was fomented by an "unknown set of people" who had infiltrated the ranks of the laity.

They told Inspector General of Police (IGP) Arun Kumar Sinha that these elements had started the trouble by throwing stones at the police and priests from the top of some buildings in front of the Government Secretariat.

Inquiry

The IGP initiated an inquiry into the incident on the basis of the complaint raised by the Church leaders. Home Minister Kodayeri Balakrishnan also ordered Mr. Sinha to inquire into the allegation.

The police have arrested a youth on the charge of assaulting mediapersons in front of St. George Church at Spencer.

The police were also inquiring into the suspected role of two retired police officers. One of them had sought police sanction for organising the march after giving a written undertaking that it would be done in a peaceful manner.

<http://www.hindu.com/2007/02/14/stories/2007021422400300.htm>

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