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1984 anti-Sikh riots: Government recommends SIT to LG

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NEW DELHI: The cabinet on Thursday recommended to the lieutenant governor that a special investigation team (SIT), with investigators from outside Delhi Police, be set up to probe the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. The team is likely to get one year to complete its work.

The decision, with which the Kejriwal government claims to have fulfilled its pre-promise of justice to the riot victims, is likely to further strain the AAP-Congress equation. Several Congress leaders, including Sajjan Kumar, are being tried in the riots cases.

The cabinet has sought re-investigation of those cases which were closed or were shown untraced. Fresh cases are also to be registered for those incidents which were not included in the 1984 riots cases. "SIT must inquire into allegations of destruction of evidence, register appropriate cases and investigate the same. It must also finalize and file the chargesheet in the court wherever enough evidence is available, after following the due process of law," a statement said.

Following the assassination of former Prime Minister late Indira Gandhi on October 31, 1984, the riots had broken out in Delhi and thousands of Sikhs were killed by mobs. According to the Ahuja Committee report, 2,733 people were killed.

Hardly any case has resulted in conviction. "A total of 587 FIRs were filed. Out of these, 241 were closed by police as untraced. Out of the cases which were closed, four were reopened and reinvestigated on the recommendations of Nanavati Commission in 2005. Reinvestigation was conducted from 2006-2009. In three cases, sufficient material to prosecute the guilty was found and chargesheets were filed," a statement from CM's office said.

The government cites the background, pointing that the CBI reinvestigation had revealed that these cases were wrongly closed by police, which had been a party in the cover-up as well as in the killings. During the charges framed by the court, unknown police officers were accused of connivance with the mobs. There are also large-scale allegations of tampering with records and destruction of evidence by police in a case decided by a court on April 30, 2013.

“In view of the facts, the Government of Delhi is of the opinion that to uphold the rule of law and to ensure punishment to those guilty of the largest massacre in the capital after Independence, a special investigation team must be constituted,” the statement said.