



## Community News

# Enquiry Committee Report on corruption in Maharashtra Waqf Board presented in state assembly

NA Ansari, 12 May 2015



ATAK Sheikh Committee appointed by Maharashtra government way back in 2007 to inquire into the cases of corruption, mismanagement and misappropriation of Waqf properties in the state which was submitted to the government earlier was presented in both houses of state legislature. On 10 April, state's minister for minorities affairs Eknath Khadse presented ATR (Action taken report) also pertaining to the Committee's report in the assembly. In this report of the Committee headed by ATAK Sheikh, Waqf Board officials have been accused and actions to be taken against them have been recommended but political leaders have been given a clean chit for corruption etc in the Waqf Board. The report says that land measuring 48,768 sq ft at Malabar Hill was sold to Antila Commercial (P) Ltd for a price of Rs 21.05 crores only. Former minister for Waqf Board, Anees (or Naseem) Ahmad had complained against this to this Commission that this land was sold in violation of the law and in spite of the absence of two-thirds majority the proposal of selling this land to Antila Commercial (P) Ltd was approved by Waqf Board.

The Sheikh Committee in its report has held Minorities Department's former officer S. S. Ali Qadiri, Waqf Board's former Chairman, (late) M. A. Aziz and M. Y. Patel guilty and responsible for selling Waqf Board's properties to the industrialist (Mukesh Ambani) at a throw-away price and has recommended action against them, but has given a clean chit to NCP leader Tariq Anwar who was a member of Waqf Board at that time. The Committee has no doubt mentioned the name of Tariq Anwar but has not recommended any action against him. In the state government's ATR there is no proposal or recommendation for taking any action against any body because this matter is pending for hearing in the court.

According to Sheikh Committee report the post of Waqf Board's Chairman was vacant after 16 August 2008 and during this period only Tariq Anwar and A. U. Pathan were serving as members in Waqf Board and during this very period the Waqf Board, in violation of rules and regulations had given NOC for construction work on Waqf Board's 9 properties in Mumbai. The committee has also mentioned a number of scams and scandals regarding Waqf Board's lands and properties in Marathwada. The Inquiry Committee, while declaring Waqf Board's former chairman (late) M. A. Aziz, M. Y. Patel, S. S. Ali Qadiri and officer incharge Sheikh Ja'ffar guilty, has recommended action against them.

The Committee has further stated in its report that in 1961, Waqf's 195 acres land was given to Aurangabad's Maulana Azad Education Trust but as of now only 30 acres of land are in this

Trust's possession and it has no answer to the question as to where the remaining 165 acres of land are or with which Trust?

As regards the land of Dargah Hazrat Shah Wali Bijapur, Aurangabad given on a 51 year rent (or lease?), Waqf Board Act has been violated in this case also. In this Committee's report, M. Y. Patel and M. A. Aziz have again been held guilty. In this matter (State) government has called for explanations from all officers holding posts in the year 2000. This committee has made enquiries into only those 113 cases against which complaints were made to the Enquiry Commission and news about which were published in newspapers.

Apart from the Enquiry Committee Report mentioned above, it is also stated in some newspapers, particularly in *Azizul Hind* (29/03/15) that out of about one lakh Waqf properties in Maharashtra, as many as about 70,000 acres are under the illegal occupation of land mafia and government offices / departments.

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