

SC CONCERNED OVER FAKE DEATH RECORDS

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The Supreme Court on Monday expressed concern over instances of fake death certificates being used to claim ex gratia for persons who died of COVID-19 infection.

Financial aid of Rs. 50,000 is provided for the families of those who died of the infection as a welfare measure.

The court had steered the initiative and approved the scheme for distributing assistance to families who could provide documents, including RT-PCR test results and the death certificate, to the authorities concerned.

The money for the aid was sourced by the States from their respective disaster relief funds.

On Monday, appearing before a Bench led by Justice M.R. Shah, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, who represents the Union and the State of Gujarat, apprised the court of a serious worry about fake certificates turning up to back claims for compensation.

'Set a deadline'

Mr. Mehta also said the process of payment cannot be an unending phenomenon. It has to stop at some point. He urged the court to fix a deadline for filing compensation claims.

"The process cannot go on endlessly," Mr. Mehta said.

But the court asked the various parties, the Union government and the States, for suggestions on measures that could be taken to counter fake certificates.

The Bench even suggested starting an investigation on the issue.

"It is indeed a serious thing," Justice Shah said, listing the case on March 14.

The top court had earlier directed States and Union Territories to appoint a dedicated nodal officer to coordinate with the member secretary of their respective legal service authorities to facilitate payment of ex gratia to family members of the victims.

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Tushar Mehta
Solicitor-General

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