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Panchkula: We don't even have Rs 10 in our pockets, says father of ragpicker who committed suicide

The victim, Ajay, had taken over from his father- three years back- to start collecting garbage from door-to-door in Sector 12 of the city.





Written by **Pallavi Singhal** | Panchkula | Updated: June 7, 2020 10:59:16 pm



Ajay was the only working member of the family and after he was rendered unemployed, the family had been left devoid of any ration or cash. (Express photo: Jaipal Singh)

In the second suicide incident reported from Panchkula's Rajiv Colony in the past two weeks, a 24-year-old garbage collector hanged himself at his house, as he was reportedly dejected and despaired after losing his job amid the lockdown.

The victim, Ajay, had taken over from his father- three years back- to start collecting garbage from door-to-door in Sector 12 of the city.

"I had met with an accident and had received severe injury in my leg. I could not push the rehri anymore," said Nawaab, his father.

According to the family, when Rajiv Colony turned into a containment and buffer area, Ajay could no more go out for his job. However, when he did reach his workplace after a few days, he came to know that his employer had fired him and found somebody else to replace him.

“On the day of his suicide, Ajay had come to me around 3.30 pm. He was crying about not having a job, as the his family had been borrowing from their neighbours for more than 15 days. Sometimes, they would take vegetables from one house and flour from another. When Ajay asked for an assurance that I would help him find a job, I had foolishly told him that it will be difficult,” said Anil, the victim’s cousin brother, who was also the last person to have spoken to him. Ajay was found dead around 4.30 pm.

“I had worked more than 25 years in the sector, picking up their garbage and then my son had replaced me. But they did not even wait five days to replace him,” said a tearful Nawaab.

Ajay was the only working member of the family and after he was rendered unemployed, the family had been left devoid of any ration or cash. “We went to the kothiwalaas at least thrice. Begged them to give him his job back, but to no avail. Ajay himself went there many times, begged them even the day he took his own life,” said Nawaab.

The marriage of Ajay’s sister had also provided no solace to the family, as they spent all their savings on it. “Even though we kept postponing the wedding, in May end we knew we had to get her married. So we called a few people and married her off. Whatever little we had, we spent on the ceremony,” added Nawaab.

It had only been a fortnight since his sister was married when she heard the news of her his demise. Ajay is survived by a handicapped father, his mother and a 20-year-old brother.

“Chai ke, roti ke bhi pese nahi the. When he died our relatives came forward. They gave us ration for a few days and even arranged for his cremation,” said Nawaab.

He is hopeful that his younger son will be able to land a similar job as a garbage collector and the house will start running again. However, his hope gives way to apprehension.

“We have tried our best to get him a job. Par naukri hain hi nahi. Every place you go to, you need either money or a sifaarish to get a job. We do not have either,” said

Nawaab, adding, "We do not even have Rs 10 in our pockets. We do not know what will happen."

Even though a police official privy to the investigation insists that Ajay used to consume alcohol and other drugs, he says, "I have been here for more than a year. Fights are a common occurrence here, but suicides have never happened before. The lockdown has hit them hard."

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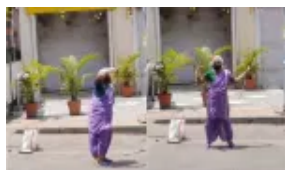
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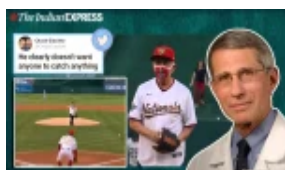
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