Minorities’ commission to seek constitutional status

‘We are unable to act against errant officials at present’

The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) has decided to approach the government for granting it Constitutional status to protect the rights of minority communities more effectively.

If granted such a status, the NCM will be able to act against errant officials who do not attend hearings, follow its order or are found guilty of dereliction of duty, chairman Syed Ghayorul Hasan Rizvi said. The decision was made during the panel’s meeting last week, he said.

Till now, only the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes enjoy constitutional status. In its present form, the NCM has powers to summon officials, including chief secretaries and director generals of police, but has to rely on departments concerned to take action against them.

More powers
If granted constitutional status, the NCM can penalise or suspend an officer for two days or send him/her to jail.

Earlier, the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (2017-18), in its 53rd report noted that the NCM is “almost ineffective” in its current state to deal with cases of atrocities against minorities. The committee recommended constitutional status to the body “without any delay”.

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