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Page 3 of 22 Search Keyword

Spiritual leader booked for 'rape'

Balkrishna Mandavkar applied for anticipatory bail soon after 34-yr-old woman accused him of rape

SAGAR RAJPUT
MUMBAI, JULY 30

A 65-YEAR-OLD spiritual leader has been booked on charges of rape after a 34-year-old woman approached the police alleging that the man took advantage of her on the pretext of improving her financial condition.

Police have identified the spiritual leader as Balkrishna Mandavkar, affiliated with the Sant Nirankari Mission. After the FIR was lodged on July 16, Mandavkar had immediately applied for anticipatory bail, said Senior Inspector Gulab More from V Pitkod police station.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone II) Dnyanesh Ishwar Chavan confirmed that a cognisance of rape has been registered against Mandavkar at the VP Road police station.

When contacted, Mandavkar refuted the allegations. "It is such a disturbed place," he said.

But even Chhaba, a media coordinator for the Sant Nirankari Mission in Mumbai, said Mandavkar has resigned from his responsibilities. "Besides, the case that is been registered with the police is a personal matter between Mandavkar and the woman... for us, it is an isolated incident with us."

While the woman had filed a complaint with the police on April 24, an FIR was lodged on July 16 after the police conducted a preliminary investigation.

In her complaint, she has said that after her husband died in 2004, she came to know that she was infected with HIV. "When my husband was alive, he would fall ill frequently. But he always recuperated me not to take him to a doctor. As I cannot walk (crutches), even after his death, I didn't know that he died from HIV. Later, when people in my locality told me that he had died due to HIV, I underwent tests, which revealed that I had also got infected with the same disease," the woman told The Indian Express.

Owing to her poor financial condition, the woman claims been seeking medical help from a trust in Hari Ghar. "The trust officials came and checked her conditions... after that, we were convinced that she had HIV. But they decided to provide her medical help," said a friend of the woman.

The complainant has alleged that after her husband's death, she was constantly threatened by her mother-in-law. "I have given to sightseers - opposite offenses registered against my mother-in-law," she told the police.

The woman, who earlier worked as a beautician but had to leave her job owing to her illness, claimed that her poor financial conditions and her mother-in-law's constant assault led her to Mandavkar. "I used to visit several spiritual discourses organised by Sant Nirankari Mandavkar's number. I called him and was asked to visit a spiritual discourse in Kharghar on January 28, 2018," the FIR said.

She added that her husband revealed to her that Mandavkar, who the woman served as the area Mukhi from Guest Road for the Sant Nirankari Mission, the accused promised to help her. "Since then, we had spoken several times over the phone. I also met him couple of times... Mandavkar would frequently ask me to accompany him to a hotel or a guesthouse but I always refused," the woman said.

Later, under the pretext of showing her a spiritual hall, cars, the Maharashtra government Mandavkar allegedly forced her to accompany him to a hotel in south Mumbai. There, he allegedly proposed to her. "Mandavkar threatened that he would threaten us his wife and force us to quit from service," said the complainant.

Following this, the accused stopped contacting her and even blocked her to unblock. "I called Mandavkar from a new number and he asked me to stop calling him," said the complainant. Following this, she approached the police.

IPS RESHUFFLE

New police commissioners for Thane, Navi Mumbai

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, JULY 30

THE CITY recorded this year's seventh death due to leptospirosis after a 16-year-old boy from Kandivali died on Saturday.

Tanmay Kamlesh Pradhan succumbed in Sion Hospital. He was admitted on July 28 after being shifted from Amar hospital last week. Civic officials said the hospital diagnosed the minor positive for leptospirosis but it is yet to be confirmed whether he died due to the bacterial infection.

"A committee will study medical records and then take a call," said a civic official.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) health department was informed by the private hospital on Monday about the death.

Latest data from the BMC until July 7 shows 246 leptospirosis cases were recorded since June 1 when the monsoon started.

Pradeep Kakade, Sion East resident, complained to the civic following which his parents first took him to a nursing home and then shifted to another private hospital.

"Many times, small nursing homes do not inform us about deaths in case of leptospirosis. A medical team will visit the neighbourhood of the boy tomorrow (Mon day) to screen other residents. We have asked for his medical papers," said a senior civic official.

16-year-old boy dies of leptospirosis, toll seven

Deaths so far

- July: Four deaths in Bhandup, Kandivali, Worli and Sion
- June: Three deaths in Kurla, Goregaon and Malad

"All deaths suspected due to leptospirosis; BMC yet to confirm each case

SEA DUMPS GARBAGE ON MARINE DRIVE SHORES

HC asks govt, BMC plan to deal with trash, asks officials to appear in court next month

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, JULY 30

EXPRESSING SERIOUS concern over the sea dumping 9 tonnes of garbage at Marine Lines during a high tide earlier this month, the Bombay High Court on Monday asked officials from the state Ministry of Environment and Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to appear before it next month and inform how they plan to deal with the situation.

According to the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB), 655 million litres of sewage are discharged without treatment every day into the sea, which in turn deposits the garbage along the shore during high tides.

The court was hearing a petition filed by Citizen Circle for Social Welfare and Education, an NGO, through their lawyer Shehzad Nagvi, seeking a direction and to frame appropriate guidelines to stop pollution of the coastal waters of Mumbai City.

The NGO, which recently filed a public interest litigation, told the court that around 9 tonnes of debris and garbage were thrown back on the shore by the tides along the Marine Drive promenade during the high tide in early July.

A division bench of Justice A S Oka and Justice R I Chagla after perusing the report submitted by the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) in October last year, said that the report shows that out of 2,671 million litres per day of sewage generated in the city, 655 million litres do not receive any treatment and are discharge directly into the sea at different locations.

They asked officials from the state Ministry of Environment and BMC to appear before the court on August 10.

BMC workers hold a clean lines drive at Juhu beach. A dead injured body of dolphin was washed ashore on Monday morning. Express Photo

MMRDA plans to double entry and exit points at upcoming Metro stations

BENITA CHACKO
MUMBAI, JULY 30

THE MUMBAI Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) has proposed to construct the upcoming metro stations keeping in mind the growth in population over the next two decades. It has proposed the construction of more entry and exit points in all stations to allow more people to access them.

"In the light of these entities decision, it becomes crucial to do planning for the long-term. We are planning Metro for the next 20 years so we should also plan stations in such a way that those are able to cope with the crowd. I thought we need to double the planned entry and exit points in the stations and instead of three, we need four entry and exit points. It is not required now but we need it for the next 20-25 years," said R Aligan, the Metropolitan Commissioner, MMRDA.

Each entry/exit point includes a staircase and an escalator. It means all upcoming metro stations will have four staircases and four escalators as opposed to the earlier planned two staircases and two escalators. "Two escalators will be for going up and another two for coming down," Aligan said. "We need to make it easy and convenient for people to enter and exit the stations. Whenever possible, we will also increase the width of the stations," he said.

Questions over the city's old infrastructure failing to meet the modern day requirements have been raised after 23 people were killed in a stampede at Elphinstone station in September last year. Recently, the Delisle bridge near Lower Parel station was shut down after it was declared unsafe.

Speaking about the proposal, A V Sheeraz, a transport expert said, "They need to study the expected load and also plan on how the commuters will exit from the premises. The footpath on which the stations ends also has to have sufficient width and the last mile connectivity option needs to be studied."

With two entry/exit points being added to every station for all the upcoming corridors – Metro 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11 and 12 – it will mean a significant expense for the MMRDA.

"While the cost to construct a staircase is not much, the cost for escalators will certainly increase. We have accelerated it yet but what were the increases, it is worth doing," Rajeev said.

The MMRDA is also proposed a unique design for the metro stations. "The stations also need to be iconic. They should attract people. The interiors will be based on themes but the external appearance also needs to be aesthetic," Rajeev added.

Rs 1,562-CR NOD FOR METRO 2A, 2B, 7

Mumbai: The New Development Bank (NDB) Vice President and CEO Shi an Zhu met Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in Mumbai on Monday. The NDB has sanctioned Rs 1,562 crore loan for Metro 2A, 2B and 7 for putting in place infrastructure, like traction supply, station lighting, lift and escalators. The state has requested for Rs 1,100 crore loan for Metro 3, 11 and 12.

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