

CBI chargesheet against Unnao MLA puts BJP in tight spot

LUCKNOW, JULY 12 /- The CBI chargesheet against BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar in an alleged rape case has left the ruling party in a quandary as the Opposition demanded the legislator's expulsion while the saffron party maintained that it was "too early" to take a call.

Sengar, a four-time MLA who enjoys immense clout in Uttar Pradesh's Unnao, was on Wednesday charged by the CBI with raping a minor girl at his residence at Makhi village on June 4 last year.

The party leadership is closely monitoring the matter and is in touch with the local leadership, UP BJP spokesperson Anand Mohan said. "Whatever necessary and appropriate steps as per the policies of the BJP (are needed) will be taken. A decision will definitely be taken," he added. The spokesperson further said that it was "too early to take a call" on the demand for the Unnao MLA's expulsion as the CBI filed its chargesheet only yesterday. "It has not been a long time that chargesheet has been filed. It would be unfair to jump to an early conclusion," he said, reacting to the opposition SP and Congress, besides the rape survivor's uncle, seeking Sengar's ouster from the party. "BJP has never compromised with its principles and we give due importance to them," he said when asked about the party's silence on taking action against Sengar even

after he was named in the chargesheet. The BJP spokesperson also said: "Our party has never done what the Congress does. The BJP has a clear line, while the Congress is facing a host of questions from different quarters, which it is unable to answer. The list of questions to the Congress is quite long and its leadership is on bail."

Pondygovtto launch housing schemeworth Rs172-cr for poor

PUDUCHERRY, JULY 12 /- The Puducherry government today said it would soon launch a housing scheme for the poorer sections in the Union Territory.

Replying to the demand for grants for housing and other departments in the Assembly, minister of health and tourism Malladi Krishna Rao said the Centre had earmarked Rs 172 crores for the scheme. Detailing various proposals of the housing department, Rao said: "This is the first time such a huge amount has been earmarked by the Centre for housing." He alleged that efforts were made to provide grants to the housing board to meet its financial commitments, but the territorial Lt Governor Kiran Bedi allegedly did not clear the file sent to her in this connection. The minister further said the government was now mulling disbursement of some properties of the board to meet its commitments.

State welfare minister M Kandasamy, who presented the replies related to the Department of Science, Technology and Environment, said the government had banned plastic products below 50 microns. Alternative materials, which are degradable, would be produced through the self-help groups to make the Union Territory plastic-free, he said. Earlier, when a plea was made by the MLAs seeking review of the tax structure, minister for public works A Namassivayandam said property tax would be reduced by 25 per cent.

TNGuvlaunche distribution of vermi-compost to schools

CHENNAI, JULY 12 /- Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit today launched the distribution of vermi-compost to schools in an effort to create awareness on solid waste management among students. The bags containing vermi-compost produced in the Raj Bhavan campus were given away to headmasters of 70 schools, a press release from the Governor's office here said. In his address at the event, the Governor touched upon the salient features of vermi-compost, it said. The Raj Bhavan campus has a large number of trees and therefore dry leaves and plant litter is abundant, the release said adding this waste and bio-degradable waste collected from the residential quarters and buildings are dumped in a micro-composting pit to generate manure and vermi-compost. "This is used as fertilizer in the gardens of Raj Bhavan and the excess manure and vermi-compost are packed and given to schools free of cost," the release added.



Agriculture department officers with farmers in Bunkulung bustee in Mirik on Wednesday. —DEEP MILAN PRADHAN

Mumbai Cong launches campaign to mock BMC on potholes

MUMBAI, JULY 12 /- Mumbai Congress president Sanjay Nirupam today launched a campaign to count the potholes in the city in an attempt to ridicule the civic body Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).

Nirupam alleged that the Shiv Sena-led BMC has "miserably failed" to deal with the potholes that have been responsible for death of four people in various accidents in the city and suburbs. Nirupam and other workers of the party beat drums and played music near craters in suburban Sion as part of the "Aao Pothole Geeny" (Come, let's count potholes) campaign. "I have launched this campaign against the backdrop of four deaths due to potholes in Mumbai in this rainy season and many more such deaths reported in the past few years," the Congress leader said. Nirupam urged the citizens to click photographs of pothole-ridden roads and share them on mobile numbers provided by the BMC. He also attacked Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnis over his statement in the Legislative Assembly that the number of craters is reduced this year in Mumbai. "Fadnis is lying blatantly in the Assembly saying that the (number of) potholes in Mumbai have been reduced. The grim reality is that most of the roads in Mumbai are filled with potholes. While Mumbaiers are facing the wrath of flood since past few days, neither the BJP nor the Shiv Sena leaders are in Mumbai. The BMC commissioner simply said in the standing committee meeting (of the BMC) that everything in Mumbai is alright," Nirupam added.

Many streets in Mumbai remained under water earlier this week due to incessant rains. As rains took a break on Wednesday and water receded, many potholes have resurfaced on the city roads.



Commuters on their way during light showers in Hyderabad on Thursday.

BJP accuses TRS gov of being 'insensitive' towards Hindu saints

HYDERABAD, JULY 12 /- The BJP today accused the TRS-led Telangana government of being "insensitive" towards Hindu saints and indulging in "Nizam's legacy politics" in the wake of the extermination of Swami Paripoomanda.

The head of Sri Peetham of Kakkinada in Andhra Pradesh was exterminated from Hyderabad city yesterday for six months under the Telangana Prevention of Anti-Social and Hazardous Activities Act for allegedly making provocative statements. The seer had been placed under house arrest here since July 9, ahead of his proposed "Dharmagraha Yatra" in protest against some recent statements and campaigns in social media and electronic media against Hindu deities. "It is completely a decision without any logic and it is completely arbitrary. It shows the insensitivity towards Hindu saints," BJP national general secretary P Muralidhar Rao told news agency PTI today, condemning the extermination move. "...this government is interested in creating a kind of Nizam's legacy politics. Other than that, there is no convincing logic (for the extermination)," Rao added. Rao earlier said on Twitter that the extermination decision was an insult to Hindus and intended to disturb "the social harmony." "This politically motivated decision is an assault on the human rights of the entire Hindu community," he said. According to police, the extermination orders were issued over the seer's alleged provocative statements made at different events and meetings in various parts of the state. Swami Paripoomanda had recently demanded arrest of Telugu actor and movie critic Kashi Mahesh over his alleged statements against Hindu deities and said the latter "hurt" the sentiments of the Hindus. However, permission for organising counter protest and agitation programmes against Mahesh's statements was not granted by police in any part of the state. On July 9, Mahesh, also a filmmaker and booked by police for allegedly making statements "disrespecting" Hindu deities, was exterminated from here for six months. (PTI)

Burglars break into Delhi shops, celebrate with victory dance

NEW DELHI, JULY 12 /- A burglar apparently indulged in an impromptu victory dance after other members of the gang successfully broke into multiple shops in north Delhi's Lahori Gate area. The unusual act was caught by a CCTV camera installed in the lane, but the burglars had their faces covered. The video shows the gang members moving in a lane. They look around, ensure they are not being followed and nobody else is in that lane. Then, they break open the shutter of a shop. Four of them move into the shop while another stays outside to watch. Possibly finding

enough time on his hand, he breaks into a jig to amuse himself and celebrate the success. A police officer said it is difficult to say why he danced. "It is a rare incident. Usually burglars want to ensure they are not noticed when committing such acts. But this is rare. However, the accused has ensured his face is covered," he said. Police said they were trying to gain information about the gang.

The burglars decamped with valuables worth more than Rs 1 lakh from three-four shops, including one trading in computer parts. The burglary happened on Tuesday.

Bhanu Bhakta's birth anniversary plans in Sikkim

SANJAY AGARWAL

ROONGPO, JULY 12 /- Sikkim is gearing up to celebrate the 204th Birth anniversary of Aadi Kavi Bhanubhakta Acharya in a grand manner in Singtam in a grand manner. The subsequent death of her father in jail from injuries allegedly inflicted by the MLA's brother in April this year only added to the ruling party's woes. The Central investigation agency charged Sengar and his accomplice Shashi Singh with rape under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, criminal conspiracy, kidnapping and criminal intimidation.

The charges entail maximum punishment of imprisonment for life. Meanwhile, the Opposition SP and Congress urged the ante against the BJP as they mounted a joint attack on the ruling party over the issue. through the state. The videos were widely circulated on social media across the state following which seven offences were registered by the Malegaon Police in Nashik district. "During our investigation, we found these videos were manipulated and the clippings were also not of places as claimed by people on social media," Malegaon's additional superintendent of police Harsh Poddar told news agency PTI. "We have registered seven offences against people who circulated these videos on WhatsApp in Malegaon. The videos misrepresent incidents of kidnapping in order to create panic," he said. In one of the videos circulated in Nandurbar district, burglar women were seen walking on a road. "The clip was actually of an area in Bengaluru," he said.

Videos that led to lynching incidents in Maharashtra were manipulated: Police

MUMBAI, JULY 12 /- At least five videos that allegedly fuelled rumours of child-lifting and led to lynching incidents in Maharashtra have been found to be "manipulated," a senior police official said today. He claimed that most of these videos were "misrepresented to create panic" and were not of incidents in Maharashtra, but shot elsewhere. Some of these clippings were from places like Bengaluru, Syria and Karachi in Pakistan, he said. "These videos should not have been circulated. Whether these were morphed, edited or bogus, the clips created serious problems," Maharashtra's additional Director General of Police (law and order) Bipin Bihari said. "Our cyber crime team is investigating the source of these videos," he said. Mob violence and lynching triggered by rumours have claimed 10 lives in 14 incidents in Maharashtra during the last one-and-a-half months.

On July 1, five people were lynched by a mob in Dhule district on the suspicion of being child-lifters, sending shock waves through the state. The videos were widely circulated on social media across the state following which seven offences were registered by the Malegaon Police in Nashik district. "During our investigation, we found these videos were manipulated and the clippings were also not of places as claimed by people on social media," Malegaon's additional superintendent of police Harsh Poddar told news agency PTI. "We have registered seven offences against people who circulated these videos on WhatsApp in Malegaon. The videos misrepresent incidents of kidnapping in order to create panic," he said. In one of the videos circulated in Nandurbar district, burglar women were seen walking on a road. "The clip was actually of an area in Bengaluru," he said.

Another video in which two men on motorcycles were seen picking up a boy, was from Pakistan's Karachi area. It was part of an NGO's awareness campaign in Karachi about missing children, he said based on the analysis of police.

Maharashtra Assembly witnesses ruckus as Sena and Oppn seek scrapping of Nanar refinery project

NAGPUR, JULY 12 /- The Maharashtra Assembly witnessed din over the Nanar refinery issue for the second day today as members of the ruling ally Shiv Sena and the Opposition Congress and NCP demanded scrapping of the project. The continuous uproar over the issue led to repeated adjournments, and finally forced Speaker Haribhau Bagde to adjourn the House for the day. The House was adjourned on Wednesday also after the Shiv Sena and the Congress had tried to snatch the mace of the Speaker. The Nanar

refinery project in Ratnagiri district is being opposed by local people as well as the Shiv Sena and the Maharashtra Navinman Sena (MNS), as they claim that it would damage the ecology. As soon as the House assembled today, Leader of Opposition Radhakrishna Sena (MNS) demanded that the day's business be set aside and the Nanar refinery issue be taken up for debate. He also demanded that the government announce scrapping of the project, or else the opposition will not allow the House to function. "We want the government to announce scrapping of the project," the Congress leader said, adding that some people's concern over the issue was not real. He said during a protest over the issue in Nagpur on Wednesday, some leaders were turned away by agitators. Sunil Prabhu (Shiv Sena) objected to Kishore Patil demanding that the government announce scrapping of the project, or else the opposition will not allow the House to function. He demanded that the LO apologise for defaming the Shiv Sena.

Maharashtra Gov. CM condole death of spiritual leader Dada Vaswani

MUMBAI, JULY 12 /- Maharashtra Governor C Vidyasagar Rao has condoned the demise of spiritual leader Dada J P Vaswani, saying he was an ambassador of peace and goodwill. Vaswani, head of the Sadhu Vaswani Mission, died in Pune today due to old age-related ailments. He was 99. Rao said he had the privilege of meeting Vaswani very recently. "I am deeply saddened to know about the demise of Dada Vaswani, barely a few days ahead of his 100th birth anniversary," the Governor said in a statement issued here. Vaswani epitomised the values of universal brotherhood, peace and compassion and through his discourses, writings and public service, he encouraged millions of people in India and abroad to lead a meaningful life, he said.

Himachal, Punjab Police launch joint operation to curb drug menace

DHARAMSHALA, JULY 12 /- The Himachal Pradesh and Punjab Police today launched a special drive to crackdown on drugs in the hill-state's Kangra district that borders Punjab, a senior police official said. SSP Kangra Santosh Patil said informed that the joint operation was being conducted with the active assistance of Pathankot police within the jurisdiction of police station Nurpur and Indora to nab drug traffickers. Checking hotels, restaurants and guest houses situated in the area of Nurpur, Kandwala, Indora, Dharmshala and Dhansungeer is being carried out and search operation is going on, said Patil. A meeting with SSP Pathankot is being convened in Dharamshala on Friday to chalk out a strategy to eradicate the menace of drugs, he added.

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