

Crime Branch probe ordered into sexual abuse of woman by 5 priests in Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JUNE 29 /- Days after allegations of sexual abuse of a woman by five priests in Kerala surfaced, a Crime Branch probe was today ordered into the case by state Police Chief Loknath Behara. Five priests of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church in Kerala have been accused of blackmailing and sexually abusing a woman. "A crime branch probe has been ordered into the allegations," police sources told PTI. Veteran CPM leader and chairman of the Kerala Administrative Reforms Commission V S Achuthanandan had written to Behara seeking to conduct a probe into the allegations raised by a man alleging sexual abuse of his wife by the priests. The letter has been

forwarded to Additional Director General (ADG) of Police Crime Branch Shaik Darvesh Saheb to conduct investigations into the matter. "A preliminary enquiry will be first held into the allegations," the sources said. Crime Branch Inspector General S Sreedhith will be leading the probe. The National Women's Commission (NWC) had also asked the DGP and state police chief to investigate the matter and apprise the commission about the detailed action. The issue came to light last week after an audio clip of a purported conversation of the complainant with a church official alleging sexual abuse of his wife by the priests was widely circulated in the social media. The

Kottayam-based church had said it has ordered a "clear, impartial" probe into the allegations and if found guilty, action would be taken. "The accused would not be shielded and innocent will not be punished," the church had said in a statement. No police complaint has been lodged in the case. The complainant had alleged that some priests allegedly used his wife's secret confession to blackmail her. Although the man, who came to know about the alleged sexual abuse and blackmailing by priests after checking his wife's e-mail account, had levelled allegations against eight priests, he has named only five priests as the role of three others in the incident could not be established.



Normal life disrupted in Srinagar and temperature plunged after incessant rains lashed Kashmir valley on Friday.

Kerala CM opposes Centre's move to replace UGC with NECI

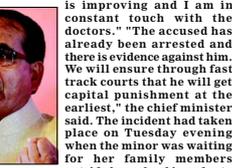
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JUNE 29 /- Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan today came out against the Centre's decision to replace the University Grants Commission with the Higher Education Commission under the Act by repealing the UGC Act, 1951. With this move, the government's aim is to restrict the role of the states in matters relating to the education sector. Vijayan said in a Facebook post. The Centre's unilateral decision to do away with the apex higher education regulator, University Grants Commission and replace it with the Higher Education Commission under the human resource development ministry, will lead to far-reaching repercussions in the field of higher education, the chief minister said.

A similar move was made during the tenure of the first UPA government to constitute an educational commission to replace the UGC, with the aim of commercialisation of the educational sector. But due to the opposition from the Left parties, that was not implemented, Vijayan said. What the then UPA government could not implement, the BJP-led NDA government was trying to make a reality now, he said. "Besides commercialisation, the BJP had another aim to implement the decision - saffronisation of the educational sector," the chief minister alleged. "Those who are ardent fans of the BJP's proposed move to do away with the UGC, need to raise their voice," he added.

Rapists burden on earth, don't deserve to live, says MP CM

BHOPAL, JUNE 29 /- Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said here today that rapists were "burden on the earth" and do not deserve to live. Chouhan also condemned the incident in Mandla where an eight-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a man, who abducted her from outside her school. "Yeh darinde dharti par bojh hai. Yeh dharti par jeevit rahne ke layak nahi hai," (These beasts are a burden on the earth. They do not deserve to live)," he told newsmen at his residence. "In cases of rape, we have made a provision for trial in the fast track courts. We will request the high court and the Supreme Court to make a similar provision so that culprits in such crimes get capital punishment at the earliest," the chief minister added. The Madhya Pradesh Assembly had unanimously passed a Bill last year

awarding death penalty to those found guilty of raping girls aged 12 and below. On the Mandla episode, Chouhan said: "It was a painful incident. We are with the (victim's) family and keeping an eye on the girl's condition. Her condition is improving and I am in constant touch with the doctors." "The accused has already been arrested and there is evidence against him. We will ensure through fast track courts that he will get capital punishment at the earliest," the chief minister said. The incident had taken place on Tuesday evening when the minor was waiting for her family members outside her school in order to go home. The accused, Irfan alias Bhaiyu (20) abducted her and took her to the bus stand area, where he raped her in the bushes near Laxman Darwaja, police have said. The accused, who even tried to kill her by slitting her throat using a knife, was arrested on Wednesday night. (PTI)



Mumbai plane crash: Maintenance engineer told father she was going to fly in 'sick aircraft'

CHANDIGARH, JUNE 29 /- Hours before the 12-seater aircraft crashed in a crowded Mumbai suburb yesterday, maintenance engineer Surabhi Gupta, one of the five killed in the incident, told her father in Sonapat that she was going to fly in a "sick aircraft". Surabhi had spoken to her father over phone in the morning on Thursday and described the condition of the aircraft as bad. "It was yesterday morning that we spoke over phone. We had a routine conversation before she told me that she was going to fly in the aircraft," the chief minister added. Later in the day was sick. She said the aircraft was in a bad condition... Surabhi's father S P Gupta told



newsmen at his residence in Sonapat today. The grieving father wondered who gave the permission to fly a "sick aircraft". "How was permission given to fly a sick aircraft and who gave this permission," Gupta asked. At the same time, Gupta said that he was confident that a high-level probe would be conducted by authorities concerned into the incident and people responsible will be held accountable. He said Surabhi got married only last year and her husband too was a pilot. He recalled that Surabhi was often referred to as astronaut Kalpana Chawla by local residents in their home town in Uttar Pradesh. "Recently, she was honoured by the Maharashtra government. She was a brave young woman, who was fond of heights," he said.

Uttarakhand CM orders arrest, suspension of school principal for showing disrespect

DEHRADUN, JUNE 29 /- Uttarakhand chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat has ordered the arrest and suspension of a primary school principal after she allegedly used abusive language in front of him. Government sources said that the principal was briefly detained and suspended. The incident happened on Thursday at the Janata Darbar of the chief minister here when the principal of a government school in

Nagoun area of Uttarakashi district made a transfer request. According to government release, principal Uttara Bahuguna "showed disrespect and used abusive language during the Janata Darbar. She was told to put forward her request in a decent manner but she kept on misbehaving. Bahuguna had requested the chief minister that she be transferred from the remote location. Her claim was that she has been posted in remote

locations for the last 25 years and she now wanted to live with her children. On being asked by the chief minister if she had given any undertaking while securing the job, Bahuguna shot back that she had not stated "she will live in forest throughout her life". On this the chief minister lost his cool and asked her to put forward her request in decent manner but she kept on "showing disrespect", the release said. The

UP Cong conducts written test for potential spokespersons

LUCKNOW, JUNE 29 /- The Uttar Pradesh unit of the Congress party has conducted a written test and interviewed candidates for its new media team in the state, introducing a system in UP the party had tried in Gujarat and Karnataka.

At least 65 Congressmen took the test at the UPCC office in Lucknow on Thursday. The candidates included some of those who have previously been the party's spokesperson in the state. The written test comprised 14 questions, including the number of districts and zones in Uttar Pradesh, the party's poll percentage and number of seats in previous elections. The candidates also had to answer the "key failures" of the BJP government at the Centre and in the state, and the alliance partners in the Manmohan Singh-led UPA government. Congress national spokesperson Priyanka Chaturvedi and AICC social media coordinator Rohan Gupta interviewed them.

"If you want to be a spokesperson for the state and represent it, you need to have the information about it. You need to have knowledge about basic things," Chaturvedi said. "The test is aimed at cutting the flab and have a leaner media team with adequate representation of women and youth." Earlier it was a team of 22 spokespersons but (the number) is expected to be much lesser this time," the Congress spokesperson said. The test panel Priyanka Chaturvedi and Rohan Gupta, which conducted the test yesterday in Lucknow, had gone to Gujarat, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh to select the media team there in similar pattern, the senior Congress leader said. On reports that a number of candidates were confused and were consulting others during the test, UPCC president Raj babbar said: "Things are being blown out of proportion." "If someone asks me such questions I will also have to think for answers." Last week, Barabar dissolved his media team and three other departments to pave way for appointing a new team in preparation for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

Proposal for media centre in Gangtok placed by DG (NE), I&B Ministry

GANGTOK, JUNE 29 /- Director General (North East Zone), Union Ministry of I&B, Kuldeep Singh Dhatwalia, called on Sikkim Minister, Information & Public Relations, A.K. Ghatani at his office in Gangtok at Sochna Bhawan, Tadong, on Thursday, said an IPR release. The Director General apprised the



I&B officials being received in Gangtok

Minister about his meetings and engagements during his three-day visit to the State. The primary objective of his visit was to deliberate on how there could be better coordination between the DGP and the media agencies and information outlets of the Centre to publicize and highlight the developmental programmes and welfare schemes.

The DG also placed before the Minister the proposal to establish a media centre in Gangtok which can accommodate the offices of the Press Information Bureau, and the Field Outreach Bureaus (FOBs) and Regional Outreach Bureau (ROB) which are presently scattered in various parts of the State. Ghatani stressed that these initiatives should be adequately highlighted at the

national and international level. He called for the need to focus more on the developmental stories and exchanges of good practices through various media. The Minister reiterated that the State of Sikkim has gained international repute as the first fully organic farming and eco-friendly State and a sought-after tourist destination.

SBSP to discuss alliance with BJP in 'emergency' meeting: Senior leader

BALLIA, JUNE 29 /- The Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP), one of the alliance partners in the Yogi Adityanath-led government in Uttar Pradesh, has convened an emergency meeting in Lucknow on July 4 to discuss "pressing" issues including review of ties with BJP, a senior leader said today. An emergency

meeting of office bearers has been convened to discuss various pressing issues including review of the party's alliance with the BJP," party's general secretary Arvind Rajbhar told newsmen here. Besides a review of the alliance, the party's strategy for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, "neglect" of SBSP workers' in the BJP government and

Madanlal Saini appointed BJP's Rajasthan unit president

JAIPUR/NEW DELHI, JUN 29 /- BJP president Amit Shah today appointed Rajya Sabha MP Madanlal Saini as the party's state unit president in poll-bound Rajasthan, over two months after Ashok Parmani resigned from the post. The decision, which came after several rounds of meetings between Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje and Shah, is being seen as a balancing act by the party leadership to avoid any political divide between two dominant castes of Jat and Rajput in the state. Saini has been appointed with immediate effect, the party said in a statement. Assembly election in Rajasthan is slated for later this year. Saini, who was in Delhi when the announcement was made, said his focus would be on achieving the target of winning more than 100 out of total 200 assembly seats in the election later this year and all the 25 seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha election. My entire focus and effort will be on achieving the targets with the efforts of the team and workers and under the guidance from the central leadership. Earlier, Rajput leader and union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, who represents Rajasthan's Jodhpur parliamentary constituency, was tipped to be the state president. Singh was the choice of the party's high command but there was a difference between Raje and Shah over his name.

Raje wanted her loyalist as the state president. After rounds of discussions, the name of relatively low-profile Saini emerged as a consensus candidate. Saini belongs to the Mali caste, the same as Congress general secretary and former chief minister Ashok Gehlot.

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