

Chintan hired 'contract killers': Cops

SADAF MODAK
MUMBAI, AUGUST 21

THE MUMBAI police have opposed the discharge plea filed by artist Chintan Upadhyay in the Kandivali double murders claiming it was a case of "contract killing" to get relief from his matrimonial problems. The police claimed that the accused, apart from Upadhyay, had "no motive" to murder his wife Hema and her lawyer Harish Bhambhani. "The applicant (Upadhyay) wanted relief from problems with his wife Hema Upadhyay by killing her, and the other accused were to get monetary benefits," the reply filed by

the police on Monday states. The police also said that there was evidence in terms of the diaries recovered from Upadhyay's Delhi home where he had expressed his "trauma, and grievance" against his wife, her brothers, relatives and her advocate. "He specifically expressed in the diary that his life has been made miserable by all these persons," the reply states. It also says that an FIR was registered by Hema for alleged obscenity against Upadhyay where she claimed that he drew objectionable and obscene images on the walls of their house to humiliate her... "the servant had started looking at her in an objectionable manner because of the said



Chintan Upadhyay

images. The grievance of the applicant was that instead of dis-

missing the servant, she had lodged a report against him, for which he had to obtain a bail," the reply said. The police also relied on the "conduct" of Upadhyay before and after the incident. They claimed that servants of the couple in their Juhu home had said that on his last visit to the Juhu home before the incident, Upadhyay had "deliberately bid goodbye to Hema three times". While the police claimed that a picture seen by Bhambhani's wife Poonam sent by Upadhyay on Hema's phone said, "I will destroy you", they have now said that the mobile phone has not been found. The police claim that though co-ac-

cused Pradeep Rajbhar has retracted from his confessional statement, it can be relied upon as evidence against Upadhyay. It says that other statements including that of Bhambhani's family members show that there was a matrimonial dispute between Hema and Upadhyay and that "he wanted to destroy her". The bodies of Hema and Bhambhani were found in December 2015 in a nullah in Kandivali. The police claim that absconding accused Vijay Rajbhar had lured the victims into meeting him by claiming that he had information on Upadhyay which Hema could use in her matrimonial dispute against him.

Casteist remark by dean: witnesses turn hostile

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, AUGUST 21

OVER THREE years after JJ Hospital dean Dr TP Lahane was booked for allegedly making a casteist remark about a staffer, the prosecution has dropped the list of witnesses after two, including the complainant, turned hostile. On Monday, an eyewitness in the case, Lalit Solanki, began his deposition. The prosecution declared him hostile after he did not support its case. The special court was also informed that there was an apprehension that other witnesses were not going to support the case either, since the complainant claims to have come to a "compromise out of court". The prosecution will now examine the investigating officer. Lahane will then be expected to speak on his behalf under section 313 of the Criminal Procedure Code. After that, the prosecution and defence will conclude their arguments and the court will pass its judgment. In February 2014, around



GOING BACK
TO A STORY TO
LOOK AHEAD

500-600 employees working on a temporary basis at JJ Hospital had gone on a strike to seek permanent jobs. According to the initial complaint, the complainant, Naresh Waghela, along with his friends was standing outside the Outpatients Department on February 14, 2014. He had said that he saw a sweeper working, and went to convince him to support the strike. He claimed that Lahane and other staff told him and his friends to leave and let those who wanted to work continue. While in the FIR, the complainant had said that Lahane then abused him with a casteist

remark, in his deposition he said that the part of the complaint was "not correct". Even as Lahane's discharge application before the special court was pending, the complainant in March this year submitted that he wanted to withdraw the complaint. He initially made an oral submission, after which the court directed him to file an affidavit. In his subsequent affidavit, Waghela claimed that the complaint was filed in a state of "misunderstanding". He also submitted that he was not under any pressure, force or intimidation in taking the decision. Since the provisions of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act under which Lahane is booked is non-compoundable, the court directed for the trial to continue.

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Car depot at Aarey: Activists see red over MMRC ad

BENITA CHACKO
MUMBAI, AUGUST 21

THE BATTLE for Aarey Milk Colony intensified Monday after activists were up in arms over an advertisement issued by the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC). On Monday, the MMRC released an advertisement informing the citizens about the Metro 3 car depot at Aarey Milk Colony. Activists have alleged that the metro implementing body has published "lies" through the advertisement and have refuted them with other government documents.

"They have published false statements in the ad. A public body cannot release an ad like this and lie about it. If what they are doing is right, then why do they have to issue a public appeal," said Zoru Bhathena, an activist.

Meanwhile, Stalin Dayanand from the NGO Vanashakti has written to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis with documents that contend the "facts" put out by the MMRC and again appealed to him to prevent the destruction of Aarey. "Public money has been used

to give an advertisement which is factually incorrect and conceals the truth. We citizens and NGOs do not have the luxury of spending and access to massive quantum of public money. Hence, we are writing to you in the hope that you will honour your words and stand up for protection of trees, forests, green spaces," he wrote.

In the ad, MMRC claimed 'Aarey Car Depot site has been selected on technical ground after examining all alternatives'. However, the activists disputed the statement with a Government Resolution dated October 16, 2015 in which alternatives were mentioned. The GR stated: "In the overall scenario when GOM is considering construction of Kanjur Marg-Jogeshwari corridor and constructing a depot with lesser impact on trees costs an additional amount of Rs 750 cr, the Committee considers that larger benefits will be achieved by adopting the following: a) construct the main depot of line 3 at Kanjur Marg by integrating Colaba-SEEPZ corridor (MML-3) with Jogeshwari-Kanjur Marg corridor."

While the ad claims that there

are no restraining orders by the NGT against a car depot in Aarey, in an application before the Bombay High Court on August 31, 2015, the Collector (Mumbai suburban district) contended, "The applicant states there is no other suitable land available for the said component of the project. The applicant states that the land at Aarey Milk Colony was initially sought to be utilised for the said purposes. However, the same has been ruled out as the said land falls in an Eco Sensitive zone. The applicant states that the National Green Tribunal, Western Zone Bench by an order dated 19th August, 2015, passed in Application No. 34/2015 (WZ) has directed the authorities to maintain status quo till further orders."

MMRC claimed that no real estate development is proposed in the car depot. However, a GR dated March 16, 2016, reveals the adjoining three hectares land will be used for the purpose. The GR states that the 3 hectares land should be transferred to MMRDA for metro car depot workshop use and commercial use, in context of raising funds through property development. MMRC refused to comment on the objections.

At BMC meeting, BJP, Sena spar over dustbins

DIPTI SINGH
MUMBAI, AUGUST 21

AT A time when the city is preparing for waste segregation amid shortage of dustbins, a few Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) councillors have allegedly stocked up unused dustbins that they were supposed to distribute to citizens in their respective wards. BJP councillors attacked Shiv Sena corporators over the issue in the general body meeting of BMC.

The matter came to light on Friday after BJP councillor from ward 16 (Gorai) Anjali Khedekar reported that the previous corporator of the ward, Shiv Sena's Sandhya Doshi, had stocked up dustbins at Kranti Maidan since last year. The matter reached police station with both Doshi, sitting corporator of ward 17 and Khedekar registering cross complaints against each other at Borivali police station.

The reason for not distributing the dustbins is "silly" according to BMC officials. A senior BMC official said, "Following delimitation, many candidates contested from other wards, while many lost the elections.

The new corporators do not wish to distribute dustbins carrying stickers of pictures of previous corporators. Hence the dustbins are lying unused. They do not want to hand it over to BMC ward offices as they can use it for their own publicity."

Doshi said there was a delay in supply of dustbins by the civic body, hence some dustbins could not be distributed. "By the time dustbins reached us the model code of conduct was in place, hence a few dustbins were left and we kept them to be distributed later. What can we do with those dustbins? Those are meant for the citizens and will be given to them," added Doshi.

Another Shiv Sena corporator Kishori Pednekar allegedly hoarded dustbins that she had purchased during her previous term. Pednekar was then the corporator of ward 191 which is mentioned on all the dustbins along with her name, while currently Pednekar is corporator of ward 199. Pednekar could not be contacted. In 2015, under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, the civic body purchased nearly three lakh dustbins in December 2015. In November last year BMC allowed corporators to purchase dustbins from their funds.

Lottery workers protest GST

Say many lost their jobs, sales have dipped after GST

AARYAMAN SHAH
MUMBAI, AUGUST 21

HUNDREDS OF lottery workers from across Maharashtra under the Lottery Bachao Mahakruti Samiti organised a demonstration at Azad Maidan on Monday to protest against the GST levied on lotteries. The agitators said they want the government to change the tax from the current 28 per cent to the 12 per cent that they used to pay earlier.

"People in the lottery industry, such as lottery owners, retailers and workers, all have come to the protest and this is in no way affiliated to any political party," said Dhiraj Gawade, an organiser.

Snehal Shah, another organiser, said: "Many people across the lottery industry have lost their jobs and sales are down by almost 62 per cent. Everyone in the industry, from computer engineers to those printing media, who print tickets have lost jobs. If the tax is not changed, the industry in Maharashtra is in danger of becoming extinct."

The organisation said its only demand is for the government

Kesarkar said the state government could not intervene in matters related to GST, so it will put forth the demands of the Lottery Bachao Mahakruti Samiti to the central GST Council

to change the tax from the current 28 per cent to 12 per cent that was levied earlier.

"This is only the first step. If the government does not listen to our demands, we will sit in front of the Vidhan Sabha and ask every MLA and MP to listen to us. If even that does not work, we will march to Delhi," said Shah.

Many workers have been affected under the new tax regime and several shop owners have had to shut down their business. Nandkishor Sagar (22) who hails from Aurangabad and used to run a lottery shop said: "I used to run a shop and fund my studies through it. Because of the tax, my revenue has reduced from Rs10,000 a month to a mere Rs

2,000. It became unsustainable as the revenue had reduced but rentals and wages remained the same. I had to shut down the shop and now, it is becoming difficult to survive."

Hemant Agarwal, 54, who owns Mangalmurti Lottery Centre in Panvel, said: "Yes, the revenue is down by 50 per cent. I used to sell my tickets at Rs 10 each but now, it sells at Rs 13. It may seem like a small jump but lottery tickets are not essential goods and they are often bought in bulk, which increases the price to an amount that few want to spend." He added: "I have already had to let one of my employees go. If the situation does not change, it could lead to an more job loss."

The protesters met Deepak Kesarkar, the Minister of State for Finance and Rural Development, to put forward their demands.

Kesarkar said while the state government could not intervene in matters related to GST, it will put forth the demands of the Lottery Bachao Mahakruti Samiti to the central GST Council.

The state government has begun a process to start an on-line lottery system.

Man gets 3 years in jail for harassing minor

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, AUGUST 21

ASPECIAL court on Monday sentenced a man to a three-year prison term for holding a girl's hand in the street and asking her to "love him". The incident took place in 2015 in Ghatkopar, when the 15-year old girl was returning from college. The accused, who lived in the same area, stopped her and caught her hand. He then asked her to "love him". The girl said in her deposition before the court in March this year that she had tried to free herself, after which the accused began abusing her in filthy language.

"He assaulted me by his elbow and hand. He also threatened me that if I do not marry him he will kill me," the victim said.

She told the court that she then spotted a neighbour and ran to her. An FIR was later registered.

The accused was booked by Pant Nagar police station under sections including 354 (sexual harassment) of the Indian Penal Code and relevant sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.

Committed to providing services to all sections of society: Railways

Says it has unflinching commitment to the poor and downtrodden

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, AUGUST 21

TO DISPEL "myths" about Indian Railways favouring the high-cost bullet train over safety of passengers, an official mail from the Indian Railways on Monday stated that they are equally devoted to providing services and amenities to different segments of commuters.

Citing examples of running trains at the lowest passenger fares in the world and providing one rupee clinics across railway stations, they claimed they had an "unflinching commitment" to the poor and downtrodden. Following the derailment of

the Utkal Express in Muzaffarnagar in which 23 passengers lost their lives, the mail contained a response on how their focus on safety had not declined.

As a response to one of the "myths" which stated that railways has diverted funds for the completion of bullet train project between Mumbai and Ahmedabad, it stated, "High speed train from Mumbai to Ahmedabad is being funded by government of Japan with less than 20% contribution from the government of India. This money, which came at incredibly attractive terms (0.1% rate of interest) was made available only for this high-speed project and

was not made available to fund safety projects for Indian Railways," excerpts from the mail read. While adding how the bullet train will be a safe mode of transport, it added, "The high speed train is the safest mode of transport in the world. The government has not diverted any funds from existing corpus."

The work on the bullet train project will commence soon, with the first tranche of \$1 billion from a total loan of about \$14 billion to be released during the visit of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to the country on September 12-14. The \$17-billion high-speed railway line of 508 km, which will be built on Japan's Shinkansen technology, is ex-

pected to be operational by 2022-23, India's 75th year of independence. Excerpts from the mail further assert that one rupee clinics have been launched at important suburban stations and availability of janta meals is being ensured at all major stations. Implementation of new technologies like condition based monitoring system for rolling stock and Track and Ultrasonic Broken Rail Detection System are being piloted on the network, it reads.

"We have done the best as far as investment in these projects is concerned. We are trying to focus on passengers across segments," a senior railway official said.

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