

Fifth gang-rape accused held

2ND CASE AT SHAKTI MILL Cops had tracked him to Andhra, Rajasthan and Gujarat, but he evaded them

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MUMBAI: The Mumbai police's crime branch finally arrested the fifth accused in the gangrape of the 19-year-old call centre employee at Shakti Mill from Girgaum Chowpatty on Saturday. Ashfaq Shaikh, who had been on the run ever since the survivor approached the police, was arrested with the help of his girlfriend.

Shaikh had fled the city soon after the incident and had gone to his girlfriend's residence in Andhra Pradesh. Based on a tip-off, a police team reached Hyderabad, but Shaikh had fled from there.

Police found that he had gone to Rajasthan, Gujarat and Ajmer. While on the run, he had called his brother-in-law and claimed he was willing to surrender, but did not show up.

"Shaikh had kept his cell phone switched off, which was a major hindrance as there was no way of tracking him, especially

PAN-INDIA CHASE COMES TO AN END

Earlier, upon learning that the accused may be hiding in Hyderabad, the police had sent a team to the city to arrest him. However, Ashfaq Shaikh managed to give the cops a slip and they had to return empty-handed. Later, he fled to Gujarat and Rajasthan where he managed to evade the cops yet again.

The accused had been absconding ever since a 19-year-old telephone operator informed police about being gangraped by five men at Shakti Mill compound in the heart of the city.

HOW SHAIKH WAS ARRESTED

The police kept a tab on Ashfaq Shaikh's girlfriend, with whom he was in touch.

As he needed money, he called up his girlfriend, who on the instructions of the police, told him to come to Chowpatty so he could collect the money.

A police team was waiting for Shaikh and arrested him when he turned at the spot on Saturday evening.

WHAT'S NEXT IN THE CASE

The police will soon be taking custody of Ashfaq Shaikh

After interrogating him, the police will conduct the Test Identification Parade (TIP) of the accused where the survivor will have to identify the accused.

Following this, the police will collate evidence and file a chargesheet after which the trial will begin.



■ Shakti Mill, Mahalaxmi, was a haven for drug users and anti-socials.

THUNDERSTORM AS MONSOON RECEDES

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MUMBAI: The city witnessed thundershowers, coupled with strong winds and lightning, on Saturday evening.

"The thundershowers occurred because the monsoon is in a withdrawal phase. It has withdrawn from the western parts of Rajasthan. For Mumbai, withdrawal is likely to start from October 1," said Ajay Kumar, director, western region, India Meteorological Department (IMD). The IMD has predicted that rain or thundershowers might occur in parts of the city and suburbs either during the evening or night-time on Sunday. According to Kumar, thundershowers and lightning are regular features during the withdrawal phase. "There is an east-west wind shear zone with winds 13 degree north 3.1 kms and 5.8 kms above sea level," he said. Meanwhile, amidst the downpour, an unidentified man was hospitalised after a stone fell on him at CST station, say eyewitnesses.

since he was travelling all over the country," said an officer from the crime branch.

From Ajmer he travelled to Baroda, before arriving in Mumbai on Saturday. An officer privy to the investigation said they had kept a tab on his

girlfriend whom Shaikh called frequently, but he managed to give them a slip every time they reached the spot from where he had called.

"He stayed in Baroda for a few days, where he got a daily wage job, and was paid Rs200 a day.

However, he wanted more money and called his girlfriend, who, on instructions from the police, told him to come to the city and meet her at chowpatty, from where he was arrested," the officer said.

With Shaikh's arrest, all the accused in the second Shakti

Mill gang-rape case are behind bars. He will be produced before the holiday court on Sunday, where the police will seek his custody.

His questioning will help police get more clarity on the sequence of events that led to the crime.

Swiss man gives women fighting chance

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MUMBAI: Urging women not to suppress their fighting instinct, a Swiss security advisor and self-defence teacher is giving free lessons in the city's schools, colleges and even slums.

Shocked by the recent attacks against women in the country, 38-year-old Martial Vout is training women to use a vital self-defence form developed by him that is known as the Andar Kriechtier (the reptile inside).

Martial insists that there is a link between women's attitude in everyday life and efficient response in case of an assault (beating and/or sexual assault). He says that a woman who is submissive at home, work and does not react to eve teasing,



■ Martial Vout teaches Ruia College students to fight back. KALPAK PATHAK/HT

will not be able to let her survival instinct work when she has to fight against an aggressor. "Being able to fight an aggressor is not a question of combat

technique but is primarily a mental attitude which is rooted in the way women behave in everyday life," says Vout. His method, unlike tradition-

al self-defence, involves primal fighting techniques, such as blows and kicks that both men and women are capable of using but have become accustomed to suppressing.

"Hit the attacker on his ears and eyes with as much strength as you can muster. These are sensitive areas, irrespective of the size and muscle of the attacker," he said.

Vout, who calls himself a feminist, believes that contrary to society's perception, women are not weak.

"Women are not weaker than men. They are only taught to think such by a patriarchal society," he said.

His lessons go beyond physical defence and involve discussion on behaviour, self-esteem and self-confidence, escaping and avoiding confrontation.

Marine Drive attack: CCTV did not record incident, say police

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MUMBAI: There is no footage of Friday's attack on a 32-year-old woman as the closest CCTV camera, located at Air India junction, was unidirectional and could only record the two accused leaving the spot. However, this recording would be of little help in identifying the accused as it is unclear, said police.

On early Friday morning, Tardeo resident Meher Jaan Mohammad Lamberaj, was taking a stroll on the Marine Drive Promenade. As she was wearing headphones, she didn't realise that one of the accused was approaching her. He allegedly tried to snatch her mobile but when Lamberaj resisted, he allegedly slashed her forearm with a sharp object. According to the police, the accused panicked after Lamberaj raised an alarm and fled as soon as he got back on his accomplice's bike.

Police officials say the accused and his accomplice took a U-turn after seeing the woman, trailed her and then attacked her. The police, they said, did not learn of the attack for about two hours after it took place. "When our beat marshals were patrolling the stretch, some morning walkers told them about the incident," said Rameshwar Supale, senior inspector of Marine Drive police.

When police officials reached the hospital, Lamberaj was reluctant to lodge a complaint, said Supale. Also, the hospital hadn't informed the Marine Drive police station about the incident either, added Supale. The police are try-

COPS LOOK AT PAST OFFENDERS

MUMBAI: Hoping to find leads in the recent attack on a 32-year-old morning-walker at Marine Drive, the police have started rounding up persons, who have in the past been accused of snatching mobiles and fleeing on bikes.

The police said that special teams in south Mumbai have been formed to track the accused. The police suspect that the attackers were from Mumbai.

The police officials investigating the case said that there have been instances of bikers travelling from Mumbai to the city to commit similar crimes.

16 teams between Colaba and Nagpada and Marine Drive and Grant Road have been ordered to check on past offenders.

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ing to ascertain why the hospital did not notify them about the incident on time.

Mean, a sketch of the accused, who allegedly attacked Lamberaj, is being prepared. As the area is known to attract multitudes of early-morning walkers, the police are trying to understand why the accused chose to specifically target Lamberaj.

No mega block today, special services on Wed

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MUMBAI: Here is some good news for Ganapati devotees. In a bid to ensure that they aren't inconvenienced during immersion, the Central and Western railways won't be imposing any mega blocks on Sunday. In fact, the railways will be diving

September 18, the final immersion day.

"In view of the seventh day of Ganapati Immersion, we have cancelled mega block on September 15," said Sharat Chandrayan, chief public relations officer, WR. WR also announced eight special services (four each from Churchgate and Virar) for the last day of the Ganapati festival

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