

## NRI father blames son's suicide on ragging in seminary

The Dubai-based father of a seminary student, who committed suicide here in Kerala, Monday alleged that ragging in the theology college drove his son to take the extreme step.

Robin John, 24, who had joined the Mar Thoma Theological Seminary here to become a priest, allegedly committed suicide in his hostel room June 10. He had joined the seminary just a week earlier.

Robin's father, C.V. John, who flew back from Dubai to his home-town Mavelikara on hearing the news, alleged that his son was a victim of ragging and was 'murdered' by a group of five senior students.

'The version that seminary authorities are giving is that my son was mentally unstable. This is baseless as he had secured first rank in his master's from Bangalore and specialised in psychiatry,' John told IANS Monday.

'Before he joined here, he was counselling elders in an institution run by the church. Moreover, he was selected after a series of tests, interviews and even an elaborate medical check-up. If that is the case, can anyone become mentally deranged in a week,' asked John.

'The post-mortem report says that my son's death was due to hanging. But there are serious flaws in the report and at the appropriate time I will expose the lapses in the post-mortem report. Now my only aim is to see that the killers of my son are brought to justice,' the distraught father said.

John has also met the supreme head of the Mar Thoma Church, who assured him that justice would be done to him.

Kottayam Superintendent of Police Mathew Polikarp, however, said the preliminary investigation has not pointed to ragging as being the cause of death.

'We are investigating the case in detail,' said Polikarp. The police are also investigating the mobile phone records of the deceased.

John alleges that the institution has been under attack for its ragging culture in the past too.

'Nine students, who were supposed to have completed their course in 2006, still remain suspended on ragging charges. One can understand about ragging in professional colleges but such things happening in a theology institution is really sad,' said John.

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