

Students protest publication of semi-nude pictures in Pune

Around 200 students of the Symbiosis Education Institute here marched to the Pune Mirror newspaper office Monday, protesting the publication of pictures of semi-nude girls allegedly residents of their hostel.

According to a front-page report in the paper June 26, the girls were residents of the Vishwabhavan Hostel located on the Symbiosis Society campus at Senapati Bapat Road here.

The reporter of the tabloid, published by Bennett, Coleman and amp; Company, claimed to have spotted the pictures on an internet site.

Its publisher, Pranab Mojumdar, however, assured the protesting students that Pune Mirror would publish an apology for the misdemeanour on the front page of its issue, the students' spokesperson Ameya Jagtap told IANS.

Sakshi Sachdev, a student from the Symbiosis College of Law and resident of the hostel for the last four years, said: "I have been here for a long time; the pictures are definitely not from the hostel since they show chandeliers and other such things which don't exist here".

'It is a regular and a fairly safe hostel provided with round-the-clock security under fool-proof administrative vigilance.'

There are 110 girls residing in the hostel and the story had caused untold anguish to parents who kept calling the institute to check its veracity, she said.

Jagtap, a student from the Symbiosis Institute of Design, who led the protest march, felt: "It is highly irresponsible on the part of the newspaper to have published something without verification. It is an attempt to malign the institute."

Earlier in the day, while neither the Symbiosis director nor any other management member was accessible, a source in its public relations department said the matter was being investigated.

Pune Joint Commissioner of Police Rajendra Sonavane, however, told IANS that the police have not received any complaint in the matter.

The 30-year old educational institute, known for its high academic standards and reputed faculty, runs 34 different courses for over 45,000 Indian and foreign students. It also offers correspondence courses to 100,000 off-campus students.

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