

Agitation against textbook claims teacher's life

A school teacher who was allegedly attacked Saturday morning by agitators protesting against a controversial textbook died in hospital later in the day, police said.

The teacher, James Augustine, 48, reportedly suffered blows from protesters near the Kizhissery Government Lower Primary School, about 50 km from district headquarters of Malappuram, where he had gone to attend a training programme for teachers.

Augustine was the headmaster of a school at Valillapuzha, near Kizhissery.

James told his friend Tomy Thomas, a teacher at a nearby school, at the hospital that he had been kicked on his head.

'He told me at the hospital that he was kicked hard on his head by the agitators,' Tomy told IANS.

The opposition youth organizations, the Muslim Youth League (MYL) and the Youth Congress had been holding protest against the controversial Class 7 textbook. The agitators disrupted the teachers training programme that was being conducted state-wide at various places Saturday.

The opposition parties and religious organisations oppose the textbook, alleging it propagated atheism and communist ideology among students. The book was introduced this year by the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M)-led government.

Police said they were investigating the incident and were yet to register a case.

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