

15 nabbed for molesting NRI girls on New Year

Fifteen youths were arrested here late Thursday night in connection with the alleged molestation of two NRI girls from California on New Year.

Of those arrested, two had surrendered before the [Mumbai](#) police.

The police action comes more than 48 hours after the incident in which a rowdy group of New Year revellers allegedly ripped off the clothes of the two girls, who originally belong to Valsad in south Gujarat.

They are said to be students on vacation to India and came to Mumbai for the New Year celebrations. The incident happened near Hotel JW Marriott in the posh Juhu area of northwest Mumbai.

The police swung into action following strong criticism Wednesday from the Deputy Chief Minister R.R. Patil over the incident.

According to police sources, the police checked video clips of all the important New Year shows held in and around Juhu area in an attempt to identify the three youths who allegedly molested the girls.

Sources said the videos were of a show held by item girl Rakhi Sawant in Hotel Tulip, another musical show in Raspberry Rhinoceros and the footage from the Bipasha Basu bash at Hotel JW Marriott which the two victims attended.

A police official, requesting anonymity, told IANS late Thursday that some of the youngsters arrested resembled those seen in some of the video clips.

Police are also trying to ascertain how the youths managed to gain entry to shows where the entry passes were prohibitively priced.

On Thursday morning, joint police commissioner (law and amp; order) K.L. Prasad had even announced a cash reward for anybody providing accurate leads to the culprits.

The case is believed to have been clinched after a woman claiming to be an eyewitness recognized the pictures of some of the youths published in a Mumbai newspaper.

The police are now planning to appeal to the girls' relatives to co-operate and convince the girls to lodge formal complaints with Mumbai police.

Presently, the police are acting on a third party complaint filed by two lensmen of a Mumbai newspaper.

Though it was reported that the victims had left for US, it could not be independently confirmed.

The incident, which has created a furore in the city and elsewhere, has started a raging debate on the safety of women in Mumbai. The latest incident comes barely 10 days after a Finnish woman

was raped in neighbouring Navi Mumbai.

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