

Hefty fine for false rape charge

- Imphal fast track court slaps Rs 1 lakh penalty on woman

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Imphal, Sept. 1: A fast track court here has slapped a fine of Rs 1 lakh on a woman for falsely implicating a man of raping her twice. The man was acquitted of the charges.

In the order passed yesterday, judge A. Noutuneshwari Devi said, "Considering the victim's nature of giving false statement and efforts to misuse the process of law by initiating false proceedings against the accused person, the alleged victim is to pay a fine of Rs 1 lakh."

The fast track court for crimes against women was opened recently.

The judge ordered that the amount should be deposited in the court within one week. Of this amount, Rs 80,000 will be given to the accused and Rs 20,000 will be credited to the All Manipur Bar Association's account.

In the order, the judge said, "In view of the above discussion, I am of the opinion that the prosecution has not been able to prove the case against the accused person beyond reasonable doubt, that the accused, Okram Birjit Singh, had committed house trespass and rape on the prosecutrix. Hence, the accused, O. Birjit, is hereby acquitted of the charge."

The woman, now 35, a widow who lives with her two children in Imphal West and earns a living by weaving, had lodged a complaint with Singjamei police station on December 23, 2012, stating that Birjit, now 29, a resident of her locality, had raped her twice in June and September that year and had attempted to rape her in November that year. She claimed that he had threatened her with dire consequences if she disclosed the incidents to anyone.

The accused was arrested on December 28, 2012 and was in police custody till December 31. He was in judicial custody from December 31, 2012, till January 14, 2013. He was thereafter granted bail. When Birjit had applied for bail, the complainant had told the court that she had filed the complaint against him under duress from her mother-in-law.

Birjit hails from Langthabal Mantrikhong, Imphal West, and used to tutor the woman's children.

The judge noted in the order that the woman changed her versions frequently and turned hostile during examination.

The woman had retracted her statement saying that she was forced to lodge a false complaint against the accused by her mother-in-law Okram Mema Devi, 63, who wanted to tarnish her image so that she could throw her out of the house. The woman claimed that her mother-in-law had started ill-treating her and her two sons after her husband died in 2006.

"There was no sexual assault," she said in her testimony during trial. No medical examination of the victim was done as the complaint was lodged several days after the alleged incidents. However, penile swab and blood sample of the accused were collected.

After passing the order, the judge made it clear that newspapers should not disclose the name of the woman, given the nature of the case.