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Woman hurls slipper at judge

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New Delhi, March 20: A woman today took off her slipper and flung it at a Supreme Court judge, but the missile fell short of a stunned Justice Arijit Pasayat who ducked in the nick of time.

The woman, one of a quintet of “educationists” personally fighting a contempt case, however, got away with a three-month jail term, far lighter than the three-year sentence given to Iraqi journalist Muntazer al Zaidi for hurling a shoe at former President George W. Bush.

The remaining four would have to serve out similar terms, the court said.

An atmosphere of shock hung over the courtroom, crammed with security personnel because of a similar “attack” by a man earlier. The five were immediately led out and taken to an undisclosed place.

The women have been appearing in the top court for over a year now in defence of Mumbai’s Boss School of Music that was ordered shut by Bombay High Court on parents’ complaints that their children were being “brainwashed” there.

The high court had also directed the teachers and staff — at last count, the Vasai school had some 4,000 students — to go in for psychiatric tests after some of the employees hinted at a mafia “comprising the CM, all high court judges and international Christian groups” trying to shut the school down.

Since the time the case landed in the Supreme Court, the women have been repeating their charge that “all state authorities” were acting in tandem to force a closure.

“It is nothing short of genocide,” one alleged at an earlier hearing. The women have distributed caricatures of high court and Supreme Court judges. Asked to withdraw the scandalous allegation, the women prayed that all 12 judges of Bombay High Court be arrested.

Reported to be “highly educated”, the women have repeatedly brushed off warnings by the court to desist from saying such things. Nor have they heeded requests to appoint lawyers.

The top court had initiated contempt proceedings against them. But it permitted the school to re-open and stayed the order for psychiatric tests.

Three of the women have been identified as Leila David, Annette Kotian and Pavithra Murali.