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 PAPER CLIPPINGS

30 Home-Minister Issue

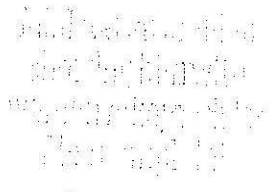
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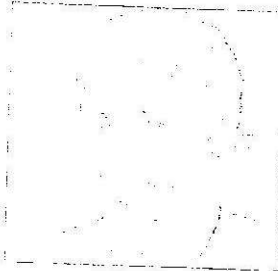
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Ramesh Jarkiholi faces 'sex for job' charge

1/21
 2/2/21



BENGALURU, DHNS



Ramesh Jarkiholi



Complainant Dinesh Kallahalli

BJP top brass seeks details

Embarrassed by a video purportedly showing Water Resources Minister Ramesh Jarkiholi getting intimate with a woman, the BJP top brass on Tuesday sought details about the incident from the state's leaders. Karnataka in-charge General Secretary Arun Singh spoke to Chief Minister BS Yeddyurappa and BJP state president Nalin Kumar Katte about the incident. The top leaders may ask Jarkiholi to quit.

Water Resources Minister Ramesh Jarkiholi landed in a controversy on Tuesday after a social activist approached the police accusing him of sexually harassing a woman on the pretext of getting her a government job. Kannada news channels widely aired video clips purportedly showing Jarkiholi getting intimate with the unidentified woman. Denying any wrongdoing, Jarkiholi said this was "a big shock" and sought an investigation into this. He said it was a "100% fake video". This comes just two days before the start of the all-important Budget session of the legislature, causing embarrassment to Chief Minister BS Yeddyurappa. Jarkiholi, who was in Mysuru,

rushed to the city and met Yeddyurappa. He said he would rush to New Delhi to meet the BJP central leadership. Social activist Dinesh Kallahalli approached Bengaluru police commissioner Kamal Pant who directed him to the Cubbon Park police station to file a complaint. "I don't know who Kallahalli is. I don't know who that woman is. I don't know anything. I'm in a big shock. Let this be investigated." Jarkiholi told reporters. "If I'm wrong, let them hang me." Jarkiholi, who represents Gokak, was among the chief architects in causing the downfall of the Congress-JD(S) coalition, paving the way for the BJP to come to power. He was earlier with the Congress. The incident could poten-

tially dent Jarkiholi's political career. His family holds clout in the politically-significant Belagavi, Karnataka's largest district. "The Jarkiholi family has built an empire. I've been a legislator for 21 years. Why was this done now? It's a political gimmick," the minister said. "I'm a charming man and I have no need to fear," he said, adding that he will quit politics if proven wrong. Kallahalli, who filed the complaint, said the victim and her relatives approached him as they were under threat. "I'm a social activist, so it is my responsibility to fight against such abuses. So, I contacted senior advocates and filed a complaint on her behalf," he said, alleging that

Jarkiholi used Karnataka Bhavan in New Delhi to meet the woman. The police reportedly grilled Kallahalli on the origin of the video, details of the victim, whether she was willing to testify and why she or her family approached him in the first place. A senior officer told DH that an FIR cannot be registered solely on the basis of Kallahalli's complaint. > Jarkiholi, Page 6

Ramesh Jarkholi faces 'sex for job' charge

JARKHOLI, FROM PAGE 1

DCP (Central) M. N. Anu-
cheth, who is said to have
been asked by Pant to look
into the complaint, said nec-
essary action will be taken af-
ter obtaining more details.
"The family members of
the woman in the video are
yet to give information," he
said, adding that the police
will inquire with the woman
as well.

This is not the first sex-
scandal involving a minis-
ter. In 2016, Congress' H.Y.
Mati was forced to resign
from the then chief minister
Siddaramaiah's Cabinet af-
ter a sleaze tape went pub-
lic. He, too, was accused of
misusing power. In 2010,
BJP's Hartalu Halappa re-
signed when Yediyurappa
was the CM then after he
was charged with sexual
misconduct.

There was no immediate
reaction from the chief min-
ister's office or the ruling
EJP.

However, Union Minister
Pralhad Joshi stopped short
of admitting that this was an
embarrassment. "It must
be investigated," he said.
"As leaders, we need to be
morally pure. We should be
clean. But let's not jump to
conclusions too soon."