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## Sex-for-job complaint filed against Jarkiholi

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: In a major embarrassment to the Yediyurappa-led BJP government in Karnataka, a CD purportedly showing water resources minister Ramesh Jarkiholi seeking sexual favours from a woman emerged on Tuesday.

The CD, whose veracity could not be independently verified by TOL, was released to news channels by a social activist, Dinash Kallahalli, who has lodged a complaint with the Bangalore police. Kallahalli also met Bengaluru city police

commissioner Kamal Pant and sought protection for the woman.

"I'm shocked and pained. This incident is part of a larger conspiracy against me,"

Jarkiholi said. "A third party...filing a complaint against me indicates it was being done at someone's behest. I won't resign till charges are proved. I will hold a press meet to clear the air."

"This is a private matter, we have received the complaint. Our investigation will happen," home minister Basavaraj Bommai said.

> 'Sex-for-resignation', P 4

## Opposition demands minister's resignation

> Continued from page 1

he CD, Kalahalli said, contains video clips and pictures of Jarkiholi in a compromising position with a woman and an intimate audio conversation between the two. During the conversation, he said, Jarkiholi is heard luring the woman with a government job and admonishing her not to speak loudly since it is Karnataka Bhavan (in Delhi).

"The victim, who hails from North Karnataka, met Jarkiholi recently as she was interested in producing a documentary on the dams of North Karnataka. Later, he promised her a job in Karnataka Power Transmission (KPTCL) and sexually exploited her," Kalahalli said. "When Jarkiholi found that the victim had the CD, he started threatening her. I have come here on her behalf as she feared for her life," he said, demanding a detailed investigation.

Jarkiholi comes from one of the most powerful political families in the state and is a sugar baron from Belagavi district. He is one of the

17 defectors from Congress and JD(S) whose crossover resulted in the collapse of the HD Kumaraswamy government in the state in 2019.

"We have received the complaint but since it has come from the third person, we are duty-bound to take statements from the woman and her family as there are certain guidelines while investigating such cases," deputy commissioner of police (central division) MN Anuchet said.

As the video and pictures went viral and were splashed by news channels, Congress workers held protests in different parts of the state demanding Jarkiholi's resignation. In Bengaluru, party workers staged a protest in front of the party headquarters. "Dear BJP, is this why your party members gave you the tag of 'Blackmail Janata Party'?" Karnataka Congress tweeted from its official handle.

Public prosecutor HR Satyavati said: "There is nothing wrong in a third person filing a complaint on behalf of a victim. Police can take statements from the victims and others and act as per law."