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ಪ್ರಜಾವಾಣಿ

ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE : 27/03/2017

Activist fails to turn up for probe

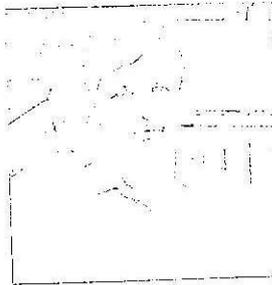
Times News Network

Bengaluru: Activist Dinesh Kallahalli, who has filed a petition accusing now-former minister Ramesh Jarkiholi of demanding sexual favours from a woman in return for a government job, failed to appear before the Cubbon Park police on Thursday.

Investigators believe his statement will help them identify and trace the woman, who has not come forward. They had sent him a WhatsApp message, asking him to appear around 11am, but he cited a threat to his life and refused to travel from his home in Kanakapura taluk. Four armed police personnel were deployed at his home on Wednesday after he first shared the apprehensions.

"Ever since I filed the complaint against Jarkiholi, I have been getting threat calls. As I don't have police protection for the journey from my village to Bengaluru, I am refraining from appearing before you for questioning. Once I get adequate protection, I will appear before you on March 9," Kallahalli wrote to the Cubbon Park police inspector.

Jarkiholi quit as the water resources minister on Wednesday as the scandal erupted with the emergence of an alleged video clip. He has claimed innocence.



Former Minister Ramesh Jarkiholi has quit as the water resources minister

Investigators visited a hotel in Gandhinagar and collected CCTV footage on Thursday. Kallahalli is thought to have obtained the clip from this place. An officer said that police would consult legal experts to know how they could proceed in the matter. "We will not wait for Kallahalli anymore. We have to find the woman or the people who contacted Kallahalli and handed him the alleged video recording," the officer added.

Kallahalli answered media queries on the scandal, reiterating that he didn't know the woman personally. Asked what he would do if the woman refuted the claims that Jarkiholi had exploited her, he said: "I don't know who the woman is. Her family approached me through common contacts. Since I do social work, I decided to take up the matter and approached authorities. If the woman blames me, I am ready to fight it legally."