

**Rahul asks PM to speak up**

NEW DELHI, Apr 13: Congress president Rahul Gandhi today hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his silence on violence against women and children, saying it was "unacceptable" and India was waiting for him to speak up.

The Congress chief's comments come a day after he led a midnight march to India Gate to protest the Kathua and Unnao minor rape cases and said it was time for Modi to walk the talk on 'beti bachao' (save the girl child).

**Ministers were misled: BJP**

NEW DELHI, Apr 13: Facing flak over the Kathua and Unnao rape cases, the BJP today claimed that its rivals were "selectively" picking the two instances to target it and asserted that stringent action was being taken in both the cases.

BJP spokesperson Meenakshi Lekhi defended the two Jammu and Kashmir Ministers of the party, who had joined a march against the police probe into the ghastly rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl in Kathua, saying they were "misled and misguided".

**Dineshwar meets Guv**

JAMMU, Apr 13: Dineshwar Sharma, Union Government's Special Representative for Dialogue in J&K, called on Governor N N Vohra at the Raj Bhavan last evening.

The Governor and Sharma held extended discussions regarding the crucial importance of maintaining peace and normalcy in the State alongside the effective functioning of the administrative apparatus.

**Cabinet again postponed**

JAMMU, Apr 13: The Cabinet meeting, scheduled to be held on April 16 at 4:30 pm, has again been postponed.

An official order issued by the GAD didn't mention next date of the meeting.

**31 pc package released**

NEW DELHI, Apr 13: Thirty-one per cent of the Prime Minister's Rs 80,000-crore development package for Jammu and Kashmir has been released to the State Government and 25 per cent of the total amount utilised so far, officials said today.

In March, a Parliamentary Standing Committee had said in a report that the progress on implementing the Prime Minister's development package had been slow and a "poor outcome" had been achieved in the past 12 months.

Out of the total package, Rs (Contd on page 9 Col 3)

**Rajnath speaks to CM, Shah; Madhav arrives today**

**Lal, Ganga quit; resignations likely to be accepted**

**Mehbooba calls high-level PDP meeting**

**Sanjeev Pargal**

JAMMU, Apr 13: The two BJP Ministers-Choudhary Lal Singh (Forest) and Chander Prakash Ganga (Industry and Commerce), who were under fire for allegedly instigating the people in Rassana rape-cum-murder case of eight year old minor girl, tonight submitted their resignations to State BJP chief Sat Sharma, which would be taken up for discussion at a high-level meeting called here by BJP national general secretary, Ram Madhav, party's pointman on Jammu and Kashmir, and were likely to be accepted.

The resignations came after two-day long high drama in the State as well as the national capital with several Opposition parties including National Conference and Congress seeking dismissal of Singh and Ganga from the Cabinet for their "controversial role" in Rassana

rape-cum-murder of the minor.

Earlier in the day, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh spoke to Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti and BJP's national president Amit Shah after which the BJP high command decided to depute Ram Madhav to Jammu for holding detailed discussions at the

**\*Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com**

Legislature Party meeting tomorrow morning on "entire gamut of developing situation" in Jammu and Kashmir including the issues of Rohingyas, Tribal Policy and, above all, the rape-cum-murder of eight year old minor girl of Rassana in Hiranagar tehsil of Kathua district.

On the other, Chief Minister and People's Democratic Party (PDP) Mehbooba Mufti has also called meeting of the Legislature Party and senior functionaries at her official Gupkar Road resi-

dence in Srinagar tomorrow afternoon to discuss all aspects of the prevailing situation.

BJP State president Sat Sharma told the Excelsior tonight that Forest Minister Choudhary Lal Singh, party MLA from Basohli and Industry and Commerce Minister Chander Prakash Ganga, MLA Vijaypur, have submitted their resignations to him.

BJP sources said the party high command directed both the Ministers to resign after national outrage over the rape-cum-murder of minor Rassana girl and fingers pointed toward these two Ministers that during their visit to Hiranagar they had attempted to shield the accused.

"The resignations would be discussed at tomorrow's high-level meeting called by Ram Madhav here and were likely to be accepted," sources said, adding the resignations would be forwarded to Chief Minister

Mehbooba Mufti, who had to submit them to Governor NN Vohra for acceptance.

Sources pointed out that the PDP had taken very hard stand on resignations of the two BJP Ministers from the Cabinet on Rassana issue and conveyed it to the BJP high command that they had to resign for smooth functioning of the Alliance Government.

In their resignation letters, sources said, Lal Singh and Chander Prakash Ganga stated that they were offering resignations to the State party president as they felt that image of the party has been dented by the propaganda unleashed against them. They were reported to have clarified that they haven't done anything wrong by visiting Hiranagar as they just wanted fair probe into the rape-cum-murder of minor.

Sources said Rajnath spoke (Contd on page 9 Col 7)



A beekeeper checks a beehive full of honeybees at a farm on the outskirts of Jammu. —Excelsior/Rakesh

**Kathua rape: lawyers' obstruction affects dispensation of justice: SC**

NEW DELHI, Apr 13:

**HC frowns on media houses for disclosing identity**

Taking strong note of some lawyers obstructing the judicial process in the Kathua gangrape and murder case, the Supreme Court today initiated a case on its own record saying such impediment "affects the dispensation of justice and would amount to obstruction of access to justice".

The top court said that it is a settled law that a lawyer who appears for a victim or accused cannot be prevented by any bar association or group of lawyers, for it is his duty to appear in support of his client.

A bench of Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud was also critical of the Jammu High Court Bar Association, which had passed a resolution not to attend the courts saying "it is the duty of the bar association as a collective body and they cannot obstruct the process of law".

"If a lawyer who is engaged, is obstructed from appearing in the court or if his client is deprived of being represented in the court when he is entitled to do so in a lawful manner, that affects the dispensation of justice and would amount to obstruction of access to justice and interference with the administration of justice," the bench said in

its order.

The top court initiated the case suo moto after some lawyers brought to its notice that the members of the Kathua District Court Bar Association at Jammu & Kashmir, are obstructing the lawyer who is appearing on behalf of the family of the victim in the court.

Advocates P V Dinesh, Shobha and Gopal Shankarnarayan informed the court that a lawyer appearing for the victim's family was being threatened and the obstruction has support of High Court Bar Association.

The top court said, "It is settled in law that a lawyer who appears for a victim or accused cannot be prevented by any bar association or group of lawyers, for it is the duty of a lawyer to appear in support of his client, once he accepts the brief."

The bench issued notice to the Bar Council of India, the State Bar Council, High Court Bar Association at Jammu and Kathua District Bar Association and sought their replies by April 19.

"We hope and trust that when we are issuing notice, the members of the bar associations shall conduct themselves and

would not obstruct the smooth functioning of the justice delivery system which includes the presence of the persons aggrieved or accused in court or for that matter the presence of investigating agency and the witnesses," the bench said.

Standing counsel for Jammu and Kashmir Shoeb Alam, who was called to the CJJ court, informed that the police had yesterday filed the charge sheet before the magistrate at his home.

He strongly opposed the plea of lawyers that the case be handed over to the CBI for further investigation and said that thorough probe was being carried out by the State Crime Branch.

Alam said that it is already a settled law that investigation cannot be transferred to the CBI after the charge sheet has been filed in the court.

"Police team was heckled by the lawyers and prevented from submitting the charge sheet before the Chief Judicial Magistrate court in Kathua," Alam said.

He said that subsequently the police had to produce the eight accused in the case and submit (Contd on page 9 Col 1)

**'Won't cooperate with Govt, if BJP Ministers not sacked'**

**Omar demands FIR against Jammu Bar president**

**Fayaz Bukhari**

SRINAGAR, Apr 13: Former Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, today demanded action against Jammu Bar Association president and sacking of two Cabinet Ministers of Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) for supporting rape and murder accused of 8-year old nomad girl.

Omar said that the youth in Kashmir would have been slapped with Public Safety Act (PSA) if they would have ever made mention of taking arms in his hands. "If a youth from Kashmir would have talked about taking AK 47 into his hands, PSA would have been

slapped on him. B S Slathia has not only threatened this State but entire country," he said.

The NC working president said that Slathia also threatened police by saying that he won't allow them to do their job. He

**\*Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com**

demanding case should be filed against Slathia for his remark.

Slathia had, in a press conference yesterday, said: "There is a Tiranga in the hands of Jammu's youth, tomorrow it can be AK-47 and bomb as well. Don't force us to (take up arms)."

Omar said that action should be taken against the

Ministers who supported the raped accused. "Action should be taken. We have been demanding action against the Ministers who rallied in favor of accused in rape and murders of 8-year old nomad girl in Kathua", he said.

"The Ministers threatened the police who were investigating the matter and raised fingers against them. The Ministers mocked the police force by terming the law enforcement agency as Jungle Raj. Such Ministers have no place in the Cabinet", the former Chief Minister said.

"We want the Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti, to adopt the same approach that she exhibit-

ed against the former Finance Minister Haseeb Drabu. The crime of these Ministers is more heinous than Drabu. If Mehbooba claims to have taken a brave step by expelling Drabu then, I think, she needs to show the same bravery today by expelling the Ministers", Omar said.

"Her saying that the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, will take action is a mere excuse. Yesterday, her party spokesperson had said that the PM himself can expel the Ministers. It's not up to him to decide on the expulsion of the Ministers of J&K, only CM has the power to decide who stays and who (Contd on page 9 Col 5)

**Restrictions, shutdown disrupt life**

**Excelsior Correspondent**

SRINAGAR, Apr 13: Life in parts of Kashmir valley was disrupted today due to spontaneous shutdown at places and restrictions imposed by the authorities to foil any protests over civilian killings in Kulgam and rape and murder of a minor girl in Kathua.

Shops and business establishments remained closed in most parts of Valley including Pulwama, Shopian, Kulgam, Awntipora and Tral while public transport was off the roads.

Internet services were snapped in Shopian, Awantipora and Pulwama since Wednesday while as speed was slashed in Srinagar on the same day. The internet was snapped in Kulgam district on midnight Tuesday soon after the encounter broke out at Wani Mohalla, Khudwani. The Railway authorities sus-

pending train services in Kashmir valley. The decision was taken in wake of the apprehensions of law and order in the Valley.

Apprehending protests over the killings in Kulgam and rape and murder in Kathua, authorities imposed restrictions in parts of Srinagar while security forces were deployed in strength at several sensitive places across Kashmir.

Contingents of police and CRPF arrived in Nowhatta and adjoining areas in the morning and imposed restrictions. Restrictions were also imposed in adjoining Rajouri Kadal, Bhoori Kadal, Malarrata and Saraf Kadal areas. Partial restrictions also remained in force in Maisuma and Kralkhud.

Authorities also placed chairmen of Hurriyat Conference factions, Syed Ali

Shah Geelani and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq under house arrest while JKLF chief Yasin Malik remained lodged in central jail Srinagar.

Authorities did not allow civilian movement in these areas and enforced curbs strictly. Jamia Masjid was sealed from all sides and no one was allowed towards it to offer Friday prayers.

The situation across Kashmir remained peaceful barring some incidents of stone pelting at Chanapora, Khanpora Baramulla, Cement Pull Baramulla, Sabzi Mandi Soura, Kanli Bagh road Baramulla, Memander in Shopian, Main Chowk Sopore, Awantipora, Papchan Nandipora, Model Town Sopore, Nowpora Bypass, Tral tehsil office, Grid station Kralgund Handwara, Sirnu Pulwama, Mirgund Budgam, (Contd on page 9 Col 3)

**CEOs soft-paddling on creation of tourism promotion infra CM's directions hold no importance for Rajouri, Poonch Development Authorities**

**Mohinder Verma**

JAMMU, Apr 13: Shocking it may sound but it is a fact that directions of the Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti regarding promotion of Pir Panchal as major tourist destination by raising necessary infrastructure are not being taken seriously by the Rajouri and Poonch Tourism Development Authorities.

This is evident from the fate of the decisions taken in the Governing Body meetings of these Tourism Development Authorities held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti last year. Official sources told

**Pir Panchal as major tourist destination still a dream**

EXCELSIOR that while chairing the Governing Body meetings of Poonch and Rajouri Tourism Development Authorities on July 9, 2017, the Chief Minister had described Pir Panchal region as a treasure of heritage and adventure tourism and laid stress on developing spots particularly heritage sites along the historic Mughal Road to attract tourists from across the country.

The Chief Minister had issued directions for developing places like Peer Ki Gali, Noori Chamb, Chingus, Mughal Sarai, Bhimber Gali and old Poonch Fort along the

Mughal Road so that heritage and history lovers besides tourists of high spending are attracted and the whole area gets exposed to the vast tourism market thereby giving a boost to local economy.

She had also directed for setting up of food courts, viewpoints, wayside facilities including rest rooms along the Mughal Road for converting the entire Pir Panchal region into a major tourist destination.

However, no discernible progress has been made on all these directives of the Chief Minister by the Poonch Tourism Development

Authority despite lapse of several months, sources informed, adding "what to talk of major infrastructure even food-courts, proper viewpoints, way-side facilities have not been made available along the Mughal Road as a result of which people commuting on this picturesque road face inconvenience".

"Those at the helm of affairs in Poonch Tourism Development Authority are soft-paddling on the directions of the Chief Minister despite being aware of the fact that without adequate facilities Mughal Road (Contd on page 9 Col 7)

**Sharif barred from holding public office for life by SC**

ISLAMABAD, Apr 13:

Pakistan's deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif today became ineligible to hold public office for life after the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that the disqualification of two lawmakers, including him was permanent, in a landmark verdict ending the political future of the three-time premier ahead of general elections this year.

The verdict was issued by the Apex Court while hearing a case related to the determination of time duration for disqualification of a lawmaker under the Constitution.

The five-Judge bench of the Supreme Court had grappled with Article 62(1)(f) which only

stated that a lawmaker is disqualified under specified conditions but did not set out the duration of the disqualification.

Article 62, which sets the precondition for a Member of Parliament to be "sadiq and ameen" (honest and righteous), is the same provision under

**\*Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com**

which Sharif was disqualified on July 28, 2017, in the Panama Papers case.

Sharif, 68, was disqualified by the Supreme Court for not being "honest and righteous" as he failed to declare in 2013 a salary he got from the company of his son in the UAE.

In February, the Apex Court also disqualified Sharif as the

head of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz.

In today's verdict, the Apex Court said that under the country's Constitution, no person once disqualified from office by the top court can hold public office again.

The historic ruling ended Sharif's hopes to stage a political comeback in general elections slated after June.

Likewise, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) leader Jahangir Tareen was disqualified on December 15 last year by a separate bench of the Apex Court under the same provision.

Following the verdict, both Sharif and Tareen have become ineligible to ever hold public office.

(Contd on page 9 Col 3)

**Daughters will get justice: PM**

NEW DELHI, Apr 13:

In his first comments on the gruesome incidents of rape in Unnao and Kathua, Prime Minister Narendra Modi today called them as a "shame" for the

**'Won't allow SC/ST Act to be diluted'**

country and asserted that the guilty will not be spared and daughters will get justice.

Expressing anguish over the two incidents which have triggered widespread outrage, he also said such crimes challenge the very concept of social justice "and as a society and a country we all are ashamed of it."

"I want to assure the nation that no criminal will be spared. Justice will be done. Our (Contd on page 9 Col 5)

**Vinod Khanna, Sridevi recognised posthumously**

NEW DELHI, Apr 13:

The National Film Awards jury today doffed its hat to two of Hindi cinema's biggest stars who passed away in the year that was, honouring Vinod Khanna with the Dadasaheb Phalke award for lifetime achievement and Sridevi for the best actress prize for "Mom".

Keeping the balance between regional and Hindi cinema and commercial and indie interests, the National Award for best feature film went to the Assamese film "Village Rockstars", an aspirational tale of a village girl who dreams of making it big.

Directed by Rima Das, the critically-acclaimed film also scored for best location, sound

recording, editing and best child artiste (Bhanita Das).

Jayaraj was named best director and the best adapted screenplay writer for his Malayalam film "Bhayanakam", which also won the best cinematography award, announced jury chairperson Shekhar Kapur. Riddhi Sen was recognised as the best actor for Kaushik Ganguly's Bengali film "Nagarkirtan", which bagged awards in multiple categories -- best costume, makeup and special jury.

Khanna, the suave actor of films such as "Amar, Akbar, Anthony" who grew into character roles in his last years, became the 49th recipient of the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, Indian cinema's highest honour. (Contd on page 9 Col 3)

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**WEATHER**

**JAMMU:**  
Mainly dry  
**TEMPERATURE**  
Max: 32.3 Degree C  
Min: 15.3 Degree C  
**RELATIVE HUMIDITY**  
RH-I (Morning): 44.0 per cent  
RH-II (Evening): 31.0 per cent  
Sunset on Saturday: 07.00 p.m.  
Sunrise on Sunday: 06.03 a.m.

**SRINAGAR:**  
Mainly dry  
**TEMPERATURE**  
Max: 21.3 Degree C  
Min: 4.9 Degree C  
**RELATIVE HUMIDITY**  
RH-I (Morning): 61.0 per cent  
RH-II (Evening): 21.0 per cent

**LEH:**  
**TEMPERATURE**  
Max: 13.6 Degree C  
Min: 1.7 Degree C