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**Kathua case: Eight lawyers named in FIR**

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Eight lawyers have been identified and named by the police in its FIR filed last week against a group of advocates who allegedly tried to prevent crime branch sleuths from filing a charge sheet against the accused in the rape and murder of a girl in Kathua district, an official said.

The FIR was lodged against dozens of lawyers on April 10, a day

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**Judge acquits Mecca, quits hours later**

■ AGENCY

HYDERABAD: A special anti-terror court on Monday acquitted Hindutva preacher Swami Aseemanand and four others in the Mecca Masjid blast case, holding that the prosecution failed to prove "even a single allegation" against them.

Barely hours after pronouncing the judgement, in a dramatic development, K Ravinder Reddy, the special judge for NIA cases, tendered his resignation.

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**Guv accepts resignations of two BJP ministers**

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Governor N.N Vohra on Monday accepted the resignations of the two BJP ministers, who had participated in a rally in support of the people arrested in connection with the rape-and-murder of an eight-year-old girl in Kathua district.

A Raj Bhavan communication said the Governor, on the advice of Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, accepted the resignations of Forest Minister Lal Singh and Industries Minister Chandar Prakash Ganga.

**Army porter killed in Pak firing in Uri**

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: An Army porter was on Monday killed in firing by Pakistani troops along the Line of Control (LoC) in Uri sector of Jammu and Kashmir.

Khursheed Ahmad (37), working as porter with the Army, was killed in firing by Pakistani troops near Chaukas in Uri this morning, an Army official said.

The deceased received bullet injury in neck and splinters in both legs and died

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**Narco test offer by Rassana rape accused unnerves Crime Branch, biased media**

**BLUNT BUTCHER**

Opening trial of the sensational but controversial Rassana rape and murder case has unnerved the Crime Branch of Jammu Kashmir Police and biased Indian media. The 'not-guilty statement' of all the accused with offer of their Narco test raises questions whether the innocent girl will ever get justice in her grave. This may perhaps be the first such instance where the accused volunteered to the test, which, if granted, will have significant bearing on the case.

The protagonists of 'Justice for the victim' might have succeeded in giving communal colour to the unfortunate incident by dragging 'temple' angle, maligning Hindus of the entire Jammu region in general and Kathua district in particular and tarnishing the image of most thronged pilgrim destination of north India in

**Kathua rape-cum-murder accused plead not guilty, demand narco test**

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KATHUA: The eight people accused of raping and killing an eight-year-old girl pleaded not guilty and asked the judge for a narco analysis test as the trial into the case, which has become the focal point of outrage across the country, began here on Monday.

Seven of the eight accused namely Deepak Khajuria alias Deepu, son of Updesh Khajuria, resident of Dhamiyal, Hiranagar, Surinder Kumar, son of Sain Das, resident of Satura, Hiranagar, Parvesh Kumar alias Mannu, son of Ashok Kumar, resident of Village Rasana, Hiranagar, Vishal Jangotra alias Shamma, son of Sanji Ram, resident of Rasana, Hiranagar, Sanji Ram, son of Des Raj, resident of Village Rasana, Hiranagar, Tilak Raj, son of Amir Chand, resident of Dhamiyal, Hiranagar and Anand Dutta, son of Shanti Swaroop Dutta, resident of Village Dharmal, PO Muthi, District Jammu, were produced before District and



Madhu, daughter of Sanji Ram demanding CBI probe outside the Kathua court complex on Monday

Sessions Judge Sanjay Gupta, who asked the State Crime Branch to give them copies of the charge-sheet and fixed April 28 as the next date of hearing.

The eighth accused is a juvenile who moved a bail application before the chief judicial magistrate. The matter was posted for April 26. The accused were presented before the court which was packed with lawyers and heavy posse of policemen.

The child from a minority nomadic community was allegedly held in captivity in a small village temple in

Kathua district for a week in January this year during which she was kept sedated and sexually assaulted before being bludgeoned to death.

According to the chargesheets filed by the Crime Branch, the abduction, rape and killing of the girl was part of a carefully planned strategy to remove the nomadic community from the area. A separate chargesheet was filed for the juvenile.

The counsel for the accused demanded a copy of the chargesheet filed by the Crime Branch on April 9

before the chief judicial magistrate.

Later talking to reporters, Ankur Sharma, counsel for accused Sanji Ram, his son and others, said that the lawyers raised the issue with the judge for providing copies of charge sheets.

Another lawyer A K Sawhney, who is pleading the case of police constable Tilak Raj for destruction of evidence, said that while the chief minister was talking about fast-track trial, challan copies had not been provided to them till today.

Sanji Ram, the caretaker of the 'devasthan' (temple) in the village in Kathua, about 90 km from Jammu, is listed as the main conspirator behind the crime, told the judge that they wanted narco analysis test and were ready for it.

In a narco analysis test, the subject is injected with sodium pentothal or sodium amytal. The dose is dependent on the person's sex, age, health and physical condition. It does not have any legal

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**Kathua case: SC seeks J&K Govt's reply by Apr 27**

■ AGENCY

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday directed the Jammu and Kashmir government to provide security to the family of the eight-year-old Kathua gangrape and murder victim, their lawyer and a family friend assisting them in prosecuting the case.

The apex court also took note of a plea of the victim's father seeking transfer of the trial of the case from Kathua, preferably to Chandigarh and sought response of the state government.

During the hearing, the victim's father expressed satisfaction with the probe so far, conducted by Jammu and Kashmir Police and opposed the plea for CBI investigation demanded by others.

"Be that as it may, we do not intend to enter into this sphere (transfer of case



to CBI) at this stage," a bench comprising Chief Justice Dipak Misra and justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y

Chandrachud said, while taking note of the submission that the victim's father was satisfied with the police probe so far.

The bench also took note of the apprehension with regard to the security and asked the state to provide adequate security personnel, in plain clothes to the victim's family, their counsel and family friend Talib Hussain.

"As an interim measure, it is directed that the Jammu and Kashmir Police to beef up the security and provide adequate security personnel to the family, their and family friend Talid Hussain," the bench said.

It also sought response of the state government by April 27, the next date of hearing, to the specific prayer that the trial in the case be transferred out of Kathua court to

**Govt welcomes Army Chief's statement**

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Welcoming the Army Chief General Bipin Rawat's statement that gun was not a solution and neither the Army nor the terrorists would achieve their goals through it in Kashmir, the State Government on Monday said this is the pertinent expression of the overwhelming sentiment in Jammu and Kashmir.

"It is a welcome announcement coinciding with a similar assertion made by General Rawat's Pakistani counterpart, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, and it is some-

thing the people of J&K, entangled in blood-spattered violence, have been longing for years," Minister for Works and the State Government spokesman Naeem Akhtar said. Akhtar said it has been the present Coalition Government's persistent endeavour right from the beginning to see that the people of the state are pulled out of the quagmire of death and destruction. "It is now for all the stakeholders, even those with differing political ideologies, to join this new

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**Missing army man Idrees joins terrorists**

**Cop among two injured in terrorists' firing**

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: An army man, who has been missing since Saturday, is believed to have joined terror group Hizbul Mujahideen, along with two others, in Shopian district of South Kashmir, police said here on Monday.

Sepoy Mir Idrees Sultan, a resident of a village in Shopian, was posted with the 12 Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry (JAKLI) at Kathihar in Bihar and was scheduled to shift to Jharkhand.

He had arrived at his native village on April 12 and had been missing since Saturday night, police officials said.

His father, Mohammed Sultan Mir, approached the police station this morning and reported that his son had been missing.

The police officials said that he had joined the terror group, along with two other local youths. Officially, however, there was no confirmation and police had

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**Mughal Road closed after snowfall**

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Mughal Road, connecting the twin districts of Poonch and Rajouri in Jammu region with South Kashmir's Shopian district, was closed for vehicular traffic on Monday after snowfall in the high altitude areas including Pir Ki Gali, a traffic police official said.

The Mughal Road was opened for one-way traffic on March 31 after remaining closed for over four months during the winter but inclement weather last week again forced its brief closure and saw a rescue operation jointly carried out by

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