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Kumbh 'mahayajna' of unity, says PM Modi



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EU formed to screw US, says President Trump
Vows to impose 25 per cent tariffs on products from the European Union



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Pakistan's CT 2025 campaign washed out

In a nutshell

Cabinet nod for Waqf Bill

NEW DELHI: The Waqf Bill is likely to come up before Parliament during the second half of the Budget Session after the Union Cabinet approved the amendments proposed by the joint committee of Parliament, sources said. During its meeting on February 19, the Cabinet is learnt to have given its nod to the 14 amendments proposed by the panel examining the Bill, they said. The report of the panel was tabled in Parliament on February 13 amid uproar and a walkout by the opposition parties. PTI

Man bites off part of friend's ear

THANE: A Thane resident allegedly bit off a part of his friend's ear and even swallowed it after the two got into an argument at a party, an official said on Thursday. In his complaint, Shrawan Leekha (37) said that he and accused Vikas Menon (32) were partying with friends when the two got into an altercation. Menon suddenly became violent and bit off a part of his ear and swallowed it, alleged Leekha. Police have booked Menon for voluntarily causing grievous hurt under BNS section 117 (2), police said. PTI

Pak a failed state, says India at UN

GENEVA: India has slammed Pakistan after it raked the issue of Jammu and Kashmir in the UNHRC, saying the "failed state" that survives on "international handouts" "dutifully" spreads "falsehoods handed down by its military-terrorist complex." India exercised its Right of Reply at the high-level segment of the 58th Regular Session of the UNHRC to lodge a strong retort to Pakistan after it raised, as it habitually does, the issue of J&K at the multilateral global organisation. NATION PAGE 7



Hackman, wife found dead

Authorities suspect no foul play, launch investigation

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Rescue teams find no sign of life

Gain full access to accident site within project even as mystery shrouds fate of 8 workers

STATE BUREAU
HYDERABAD

After five days of relentless effort, rescue teams have finally gained full access to the accident site within the SLBC tunnel project.

The tunnel's end area presents precarious conditions, with more than six metres of the 9.2-metre radius tunnel covered in rubble and boulders. The rescue teams, which included some 130 members from the NDRF, reached the last point of the tunnel, taking stock of the situation.

They studied the ground conditions to prepare themselves for the task ahead of them. But there was no sign of life anywhere inside the tunnel. Mystery shrouded the fate of the eight missing workers and engineers.

The impact of the roof collapse extended up to some 100 metres. The roof soil in the affected block continues to pose a threat of further collapse despite some signs of partial stabilisation. The ground conditions are a little more drier compared to what they were a day before when the rat miners succeeded in making their way up to the last point.



Former Minister and senior BRS MLA T Harish Rao argues with a police official as the former was barred from visiting the SLBC tunnel collapse site, triggering a political storm.

The overall situation remains unpredictable, as the tunnel end is littered with massive boulders that rolled down during the landslide. Rescue operations require the use of heavy machinery to move the boulders, as human intervention alone is insufficient.

The machines are crucial in ensuring the safe removal of debris and accessing any

individuals trapped within the tunnel. The debris removal that commenced on Thursday morning would continue non-stop in three shifts. The NDRF, SDRF, MARCOS, and Rathole Miners teams engaged themselves in making a passage to the tunnel end.

The mud piled up to a height of 15 feet in the place. The Tunnel Boring Ma-

chine's front end was destroyed and pushed backwards as the roof collapsed. The machine, which was totally damaged in the impact of the roof collapse, is being dismantled with machine cutters obtained from the Railways in Secunderabad. It takes rescue teams five hours to journey inside the tunnel and return.

(SEE PAGES 2, 5)

BRS leaders barred from visiting site

STATE BUREAU
HYDERABAD

Former Minister and senior BRS MLA T Harish Rao and other leaders were barred by the police from visiting the SLBC tunnel collapse site, triggering a political storm.

Harish Rao, along with former Ministers G Jagadish Reddy, S Niranjan Reddy, V Srinivas Goud, and other leaders, were stopped at a police checkpoint near Domalampeta. A heated argument ensued between the BRS leaders and the police, following which BRS leaders staged a sit-in protest. Questioning the sudden restrictions, Harish Rao accused the Congress government of blocking opposition leaders from inspecting the site.

"Did Revanth Reddy instruct you to stop us?" he charged against the police, directly blaming the Chief Minister. He was also not allowed to meet Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar

Reddy and other officials stationed at a project guest house. The locals alleged that the police had allowed local leaders and media personnel to access the area for the last five days, but imposed prohibitory orders within a five-km radius on Thursday — coinciding with the BRS leaders' visit. Speaking to the media, Harish Rao slammed the Congress government for its lack of transparency. "For six days, the government has failed to bring out the trapped workers, yet they are busy blocking opposition leaders instead of expediting rescue efforts. Are they trying to hide something?" he asked.

Harish Rao expressed shock that essential measures such as restoration of conveyor belt, and removal of debris of tunnel bore machine and other equipment along with pipes which were obstructing rescue works, were not taken up even six days after the tragedy. (SEE PAGE 2)

EU team arrives in India for trade talks



NEW DELHI

The top leadership of India and the European Union (EU) is expected to infuse on Friday a fresh momentum in sealing an ambitious trade deal at the earliest as the 27-nation bloc is keen to re-energise the two-way economic ties amid its looming friction with the US on tariffs.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, accompanied by senior political leaders of the bloc, began a high-profile two-day visit to India on Thursday afternoon. "In an era of conflicts and intense competition, you need trusted friends. For Europe, India is such a friend and a strategic ally," Von der Leyen said. "I'll discuss with @narendramodi how to take our strategic partnership to the next level," she said on X. PTI

Karnataka BJP opposes water release to TG

BENGALURU

Karnataka BJP has slammed the Congress-led government for the release of 1.24 TMC of water to Telangana from the reservoirs against the interests of the State. Leader of Opposition R Ashoka stated on Thursday that the Congress-led government in Karnataka is "surpassing even Mallappa Setty and Mir Sadiq in betrayal".

Mallappa Setty and Mir Sadiq betrayed Indian warriors of freedom struggle by colluding with the British. Ashoka further said, "Last year, despite the severe drought, the Congress government secretly released Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu. Now, without considering the scorching summer, it is releasing 1.24 TMC of water from the Alamatti and Narayanpur reservoirs to Telangana."

'Political gains'

"Mr Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, even after officials have stated that releasing water now would harm the State and despite

opposition from farmer organisations, you are still releasing water to Telangana for your political gains. Have you made any secret deals with Telangana Congress leaders to lobby the Congress high command for the Chief Minister's seat?" Ashoka said.

He further charged, "Is your political self-interest more important than protecting the interests of the State's farmers and common people? On whose authority did you permit Karnataka's water to be released to Telangana?"

Asked about allegations that water was released to Telangana from Narayanapura dam in an overnight operation, Deputy Chief Minister Shivakumar, who is also the Water Resources Minister, said, "There is nothing to hide here. Riparian States have been helping each other in times of distress. They have helped us on many occasions, and we help them, too. One TMC of water has been released as the Irrigation Minister personally appealed for it." IANS

CONGRESS GOVT IS RELEASING 1.24 TMC FROM ALAMATTI, NARAYANPUR RESERVOIRS TO TELANGANA, SAYS LEADER OF OPPOSITION R ASHOKA

Revanth acting as RSS CM, says Kavitha

STATE BUREAU
HYDERABAD

BRS MLC K Kavitha launched a blistering attack on Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for acting under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's directions and working as an RSS Chief Minister. She said the Congress government in Telangana was

surviving on BJP's support, and both parties were working with the sole agenda of targeting the Kalvakuntla family and weaken the BRS.

Addressing the media persons at Telangana Bhavan on Thursday, Kavitha raised suspicions, pointing out that immediately after his meeting with Modi, Revanth Reddy started talking

about filing cases against former CM K Chandrababhan Rao and former Minister KT Rama Rao.

Conspiracy

"This is nothing but a well-planned conspiracy. The Chief Minister's only agenda is to harass the Kalvakuntla family and dismantle the BRS, which has been the

protective shield for Telangana," she said.

The BRS MLC also slammed the Chief Minister for spreading falsehoods, pointing to his remarks twisting the deaths of individuals to suit political narratives. "Look at the absurdity — a lawyer who died of a heart attack in the court, another death was declared as

murder due to a property dispute by the district SP, and a natural death in Dubai was turned into a political ploy. Revanth Reddy is peddling blatant lies to mislead people," she charged. Kavitha questioned the unofficial role of Revanth Reddy's brother, Tirupati Reddy, in government affairs. (SEE PAGE 2)

MLC polling concludes in TG, counting on Mar 3

STATE BUREAU
HYDERABAD

Voting for the three MLC constituencies, including one Graduates and two Teachers constituencies, passed off peacefully on Thursday save for a few sporadic incidents. Counting for the three constituencies would be held on March 3. In the Karimnagar-Medak-Nizamabad-Adilabad Graduates Constituency, the voting percentage was about 63.09. Similarly, in the Nalgonda-Warangal-Khammam Teachers constituency it was 93.55 per cent and Karimnagar-Medak-Adilabad-Nizamabad Teachers Constituency, it was 83.24.

The voting commenced at 8 am and continued till 4 pm. At a few polling stations, voters turned up in large numbers in the afternoon. (REPORT PAGE 4)

SOAKED IN DEVOTION



A devotee dressed as Goddess Kali dances as part of a ritual during a procession for Shivratri, in Chennai on Thursday. — Photo: PTI

DRDO to showcase India's defence might

CITY BUREAU
HYDERABAD

India's Defence might — from the recently-tested hypersonic missile to the majestic battle tank, Arjun, to drones and radars and initiatives into the future warfare — will be on display at the sprawling Gachibowli stadium from February 28 to March 2.

For the first time, the Defence Research and Devel-

opment Organisation (DRDO) will showcase its prowess on a massive scale for students and the general public through the event 'Vigyan Vaibhav'.

Science Day

The three-day event, which will be inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday, is being jointly organised by the DRDO, Aeronautical Society of India and Kalam Insti-

tute of Youth Excellence as part of Indian National Science Day.

The exhibition will showcase state-of-the-art DRDO and defence aerospace products in about 200 stalls, providing an opportunity to witness technological advancements that are shaping India's future. Short-range ballistic missiles, quick-reaction surface-to-air missiles, and hypersonic glide missiles, besides the

latest radar system, will also be displayed. Defence research labs, defence PSUs and private players are taking part in the event, which also features talks on career prospects in the defence and aerospace sectors, besides interactive sessions with industry experts.

GA Srinivas Murthy, Director, Defence Research and Development Laboratory, said the DRDO will exhibit its indigenously devel-

oped missile systems, including recently tested hypersonic missiles, surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles, and aerospace technologies to people.

"These are real missiles, which will be on display, but without propulsion and explosives. So far, people might have seen them on television but now they can have first-hand experience," he said. (SEE PAGE 2)

Six-month-old fawn rescued

CITY BUREAU
HYDERABAD

A six-month-old fawn was rescued by the Asifnagar police from Gudimalkapur on Thursday morning. It was later handed over to the Forest Department.

According to the Asifnagar Inspector G Venkateshwarlu, some locals noticed a pack of dogs trying to attack the fawn moving around on the road near Mohammadia Masjid at Gudimalkapur in



the morning. The people alerted the Asifnagar police who rushed to the spot and chased away the dogs. They took the fawn into safe cus-

today and brought it to the police station.

On being alerted by the police, the Forest Department officials came to the police station and took it away. It will be kept at the Nehru Zoological Park and later released into the wild. The police suspect that some persons might have brought the fawn from forest areas and kept with them. Due to fear of legal action, they might have released it.