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Top Cleric among 7 killed in Pak suicide blast

18 others injured in blast during Friday prayers at a seminary



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CT 2025: Aussies in semis as rain washes out tie

In a nutshell

Seven killed in separate incidents

KOTHAGUDEM: Seven people were killed in separate incidents in the district on Friday. In the first incident at Bhadrachalam, two students drowned when they went for a holy bath in the Godavari river. In another incident at Cherla, two labourers were crushed to death by a tractor carrying sand load. At Manugur, one M Prasad was beaten to death with a boulder by unidentified assailants. In a road accident, a 19-year-old died after he lost control of the bike he was riding on. In another incident, a biker was killed when an auto ramed his bike.

Tuhin Pandey new SEBI chairman

NEW DELHI: The government appointed Finance Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey as the 11th chairman of the capital market regulator, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). The Odisha-cadre Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer would replace Madhabi Puri Buch, who completes her three-year tenure on Friday (February 28). The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Pandey, IAS (OR:1987), Finance Secretary and Secretary, Department of Revenue, to the post of SEBI chairman. PTI

India, EU set target for mega FTA

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Friday agreed to seal a much-awaited free trade deal by this year and boost technology and defence co-operation — a move that came amid geopolitical headwinds and rising concerns over Trump's policy on tariffs. In their talks, they also decided to expand two-way defence cooperation, especially in the Indo-Pacific with Von der Leyen announcing that the EU was looking at firming up a security and defence pact with India. BUSINESS PAGE 8

25 workers trapped in U'khand avalanche

32 others pulled out to safety, bad weather halts rescue ops

PTI
DEHRADUN

Thirty-two of the 57 Border Roads Organisation (BRO) workers trapped under an avalanche in the high-altitude village of Mana in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district have been rescued, concern over the safety of the other 25 mounting as night fell on the snowbound slopes and rescue efforts came to a temporary halt.

The snowslide, which buried a Border Roads Organisation camp between Mana and Badrinath, rolled down early on Friday. Multiple teams battled through tough terrain, heavy snow and icy temperatures through the day to reach the men. They initially pulled out 10 workers and then the others, sources said.

Four of those rescued are reported to be in a critical condition, the Army PRO said. All 32 have been taken to the ITBP camp in Mana for treatment, the sources said. Mana, three kilometres from Badrinath, is the last village on the India-Tibet border at a height of 3,200 metres.



Rescue operation underway after BRO labourers got trapped under an avalanche, in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand on Friday. — Photo:PTI

The situation is critical with the containers buried under six to seven feet of snow.

— VINOD KUMAR SUMAN, DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND REHABILITATION SECRETARY

Visuals from Mana showed rescuers trudging through high piles of snow in a grim landscape bathed in white. Rescue operations were stopped in view of continuing bad weather and

the impending danger of more avalanches in Mana. Two mild avalanches had followed the main one.

The avalanche hit around 7.15 am, burying the workers inside eight containers and

one shed, the Army said. Its swift response teams, comprising more than 100 people from the Ibx Brigade, especially trained in high altitude rescue operations, were immediately mobilised. The team included doctors and ambulances.

According to Disaster Management and Rehabilitation Secretary Vinod Kumar Suman, the situation is critical with the containers buried under six to seven feet of snow. (SEE PAGE 2)

'No chance of survivors in SLBC tunnel mishap'

Jupally says only a miracle could save them

STATE BUREAU
Hyderabad

As the operations to rescue the eight persons trapped in the Srisailem Left Bank Canal (SLBC) are under progress, Tourism Minister Jupally Krishna Rao said only a miracle could save the workers.

"I have personally visited the spot and as far as I know, 100 per cent there is no chance. It is my expectation and opinion, technical experts might have other opinions," Jupally Krishna Rao said at a press conference in Gandhi Bhavan on Friday.

The rescue operations would be continued for another two days. The company, which was executing the tunnel works, was alert. Had the company representatives did not sense trouble

Reports of bodies found fake: Collector

NAGARKURNOOL: Dismissing reports in a section of media that a few bodies were noticed in the SLBC tunnel, District Collector B Santosh clarified that it was fake news and said no bodies were traced so far. A few reports were published in a section of media that the Ground Penetrating Radar had captured images of human bodies trapped under the debris at five different locations in the tunnel.

The Collector further said the rescue operations would be continued on Saturday. "If there is any development in the rescue operations, the same will be shared officially," Santosh stressed while speaking to media persons at the mishap site in Domalpenta.

early and alert the workers, nearly 40 persons would have died in the incident, he said. The Minister represents Kollapur constituency from Nagarkurnool district under which the SLBC tunnel collapsed on February 22. After having monitored

the rescue operations for a few days, the Minister arrived in the city. Newly appointed AICC Telangana in-charge Meenakshi Natarajan arrived in the city on Friday morning to hold a meeting with party leaders in the afternoon. (SEE PAGE 2)

3 killed in Puppalguda fire mishap

CITY BUREAU
Hyderabad

Three people, including a girl child, died of suffocation after a major fire broke out in an independent residential building at Pasha Colony in Puppalguda on Friday evening. A short circuit is suspected to have led to the fire, police said.

As per available information, the fire broke out on the ground floor in the house belonging to one Osman, a grocer, at around 6 pm. As the thick smoke engulfed the place, Jameela Khatoon (70), Suhana Kha-

toon (40) and Sijira Khatoon (7), who got trapped inside the house, reportedly died of asphyxiation. The presence of three LPG gas cylinders in the building, which caught fire and reportedly exploded, ended up adding to the fire. (SEE PAGE 2)

Rajnath tells students to provide solution to tech challenges

CITY BUREAU
Hyderabad

Wars have increasingly been moving away from being hardware oriented to the field of software, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said while urging students to get trained in these technologies and provide solutions to technological challenges.

Speaking at 'Vigyan Vaibhav' 2025, a science expo jointly organised by the DRDO, Aeronautical Society of India and Kalam Institute of Youth Excellence as part of Indian National Science Day at Gachibowli stadium here, Rajnath Singh, on Friday, said, "If you want to



Rajnath Singh

remain strong and secure in adverse situations, we need youth, who can provide solutions to critical technological changes, trained in these technologies."

Amidst clash over implementation of National Edu-

cation Policy 2020 by some States like Tamil Nadu, the Defence Minister said it was the joint responsibility of the Centre and States to ensure that future generations get the best of the education.

"No child should be left without a good education and the onus of bringing up our younger generation as future and globally ready must be a joint effort," he said. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy urged Defence Minister to declare Hyderabad-Bengaluru as the Defence Industrial Corridor. This would bring in investments and more missiles manufactured besides creating startup companies, he said. (REPORT PAGE 2)

KTR blasts Congress govt for starving students in ST hostel

STATE BUREAU
Hyderabad

BRS working president KT Rama Rao castigated the Congress government, over its failure to provide basic food for ST hostel students, while Ministers indulged in luxurious meal.

Citing news reports, Rama Rao said students at the ST Boys' Hostel in Konadagula, Nagarkurnool district, were reportedly denied meals on Shivaratri festival and were instead

While Ministers enjoy helicopter rides and feast on fish curry, students are left starving, says BRS working president

told to walk to nearby temple for food at Annadanam.

Of the 380 students, 200 were present, yet hostel staff refused to cook, instructing them to eat at

Gudibanda Shiva Temple for lunch and Gangamma Temple for dinner. "While Ministers enjoy helicopter rides and feast on fish curry, students are left starving," Rama Rao lashed out, calling it a shameful reflection of people's governance. He fumed at the government for forcing children to walk long distances just to eat. "How can a government that cannot feed its own students call itself a people's administration?" he questioned.

Centre nod for Mamnoon airport in Warangal

STATE BUREAU
Hyderabad

The Centre has accorded approval for Mamnoon airport in Warangal. The Telangana government has been appealing to the Central government to accord permission for construction of an airport at Mamnoon since long.

There was a condition that construction of a new airport from 150-km distance from Shamshabad airport would not be permitted. In November 2024, the Telangana government had approached the Airports Authority of India stating that Hyderabad International Airport Limited had issued 'No Objection Certificate' Accordingly, instructions were issued to hand over 253 acres to AAI for development of Warangal Airport. At present, Warangal airport is a non-operational AAI airport. The Ministry of Civil Aviation has also directed the AAI to commence the works at Mamnoon.

Bird flu detected in cats in MP

BHOPAL

Normalcy is expected to return after March 4 in Chhindwara town as the H5N1 virus was detected in domestic cats. The meat, chicken, and egg markets are closed and people are advised to visit government hospitals if they have any flu-like symptoms.

The entire tribal-dominated district has been on high alert since February 10. This is the first time in India that domestic cats have been detected with bird flu.

On January 10, according to a senior government official, 99 domestic cats fell sick and were brought to a veterinary hospital, later

two of them were detected to have the H5N1 virus. Although avian influenza usually does not infect humans, in rare cases, illnesses in humans from avian influenza virus infections have ranged in severity from no symptoms or mild illness to severe disease that resulted in death. (SEE PAGE 2)

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