

11 dead, 50 rescued after India building collapse

New Delhi, India

Eleven people were confirmed dead on Thursday three days after a building under construction in southern India caved in, officials said.

Around 400 rescuers have been scouring through tonnes of concrete and steel after the latest tragedy in Karnataka state on Tuesday.

Fifty-three people have been rescued from the rubble of the five-storey building in Dharwad district, but three more bodies were pulled out on Thursday.

"At least 15 people are possibly still under the debris and it's unlikely they will survive," emergency official Srikant, who goes by one name, told AFP.

Heavy earth-movers and rescuers with specialised equipment and sniffer dogs were deployed in the increasingly desperate operation.

Brazil 'still studying' Jerusalem embassy

Brasília, Brazil

Brazil is "still studying" the relocation of its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, Brazil's top diplomat said Wednesday, days before President Jair Bolsonaro is due to visit the country.

After taking power in January, Bolsonaro reiterated a pledge to follow US President Donald Trump's lead in moving the embassy from Tel Aviv.

But his far-right government has since rowed back in response to fears the shift could endanger Brazil's valuable meat exports to Arab markets.

Foreign Minister Ernesto Araujo's latest remarks, however, suggest the controversial



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ERNESTO ARAUJO, FM

proposal is still on the table.

"The issue of Jerusalem is very important, it is part of the essence of what this new relationship with Israel may mean, we are still studying the way that (decision) will be taken," Araujo told reporters.

The shift must be in line with "other policies in the region to make it clear that, if it were the case, it would be a positive movement, as part of Brazil's

contribution to peace and stability," he added.

Bolsonaro, who has been in the United States this week for talks with President Donald Trump before going to Chile, is due to visit Israel from March 31 to April 2 as he seeks to strengthen ties with ultraconservative governments around the world.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attended Bol-

sonaro's January 1 inauguration in Brazil.

The decision to move the embassy is highly sensitive because Israel claims all of Jerusalem as its capital, while Palestinians view east Jerusalem as the capital of its future state.

Virtually all countries agree that Jerusalem's status can only be defined through wider Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations.

So far, only the United States and Guatemala have broken with that consensus by opening embassies in Jerusalem. Paraguay backtracked on a decision last year to move its embassy. Israel and the US have spoken with Honduras about its embassy going to Jerusalem.

Tuberculosis can be eradicated by 2045: experts

Paris, France

The world can eradicate tuberculosis by 2045 if the fight against the killer disease is properly funded, an international team of experts said Wednesday.

Warning of the immense economic and social costs of inaction, they said that better screening, treatments and public awareness were needed to reduce the more than 10 million cases recorded every year.

A chronic lung disease which is preventable and largely treatable if caught in time, tuberculosis is the top infectious killer of our time, causing over 1.6 million deaths each year.

"That is huge and the economic burden of that to both developing and developed nations is staggering," Eric Goosby, the United Nations' special envoy for the disease, said.

Burund schoolgirls jailed for doodling on president's photo

Nairobi, Kenya

Three teenage schoolgirls in Burundi have been sent to prison to await trial for scribbling on a picture of President Pierre Nkurunziza in textbooks, activists said yesterday.

The girls, aged 15, 16 and 17, face up to five years in prison for insulting the head of state if found guilty. Judges said the three girls should be "prosecuted for contempt of the head of state", and ordered them to a juvenile section of a prison in the north of Burundi at Ngozi to await trial, said FENADEB, a civil society umbrella group of 48 organisations.

The trio has been in custody since March 12, when they

were arrested with three other schoolgirls and a 13-year-old boy. The boy was released immediately because he was below the age of criminal responsibility, while the three girls were released without charge. The girls are accused of defacing photographs of Nkurunziza in five textbooks belonging to their school, but teachers pointed out that the books are shared among all the pupils as there are not enough for everyone to have their own.

A judicial source, who called the case "very sensitive" and said it was overseen directly by the Attorney General, reported that the girls arrived at the prison on Wednesday afternoon.

Blast rocks east China chemical plant

AFP | Beijing, China

At least six people were killed and 30 seriously injured in a chemical plant blast that rocked eastern China yesterday, officials said.

Numerous others in the vicinity were slightly injured in the blast at a facility run by Tianjiayi Chemical in Yancheng, Jiangsu province, city officials said on their official Twitter-like Weibo account.

"At present, on-site rescue is still going on... The cause of the accident is under investigation," officials said.

The blast occurred at around 2:50 pm (0650 GMT) at a facility run by Tianjiayi Chemical in Yancheng, Jiangsu province, city officials said on their



Social media pictures from the blast site (Courtesy of Daily Mail)

official Twitter-like Weibo account. Footage from state

broadcaster CCTV showed windows of nearby houses blown out from the force of the explosion. An aerial view of the blast area showed a large swath of destruction in an industrial park, where multiple fires still raged.

Injured residents near the site of the explosion have been sent to hospital for treatment, according to local authorities.

Medical staff, as well as personnel from the public security bureau and fire department, have been sent to the scene, they added. The provincial fire brigades said on Weibo they had recovered 12 injured victims.

Thirty-one people have been rescued so far, officials added, without specifying whether or not they were injured.

Police, tradesmen rush to prepare mosque for Friday prayers

Christchurch, New Zealand

New Zealand police and tradesmen are working intensively in the hope of readying the Al Noor mosque to hold Friday prayers, just a week after it was the centre of a racist shooting which left 50 dead.

"Police have been working relentlessly, doing everything in our power to gather all appropriate evidence from what are active crime scenes so we can allow people to return to the mosques as quickly as possible," a police spokesman said, referring to Al Noor and a second mosque in Christchurch attacked by the gunman.

An army of carpenters, glaziers, gardeners and carpet layers could be seen entering the Al Noor grounds Thursday and the police spokesman said they were trying to return the mosque to its original state.

The areas around the mosques remained cordoned off and guarded by armed police, but the spokesman said they were working "to allow the Muslim community back into the mosque on Friday for Friday prayers".

Fifty people were killed and as many wounded when a self-



Residents and schoolchildren wearing headscarves arrive for the funeral of those killed in New Zealand's twin mosque attacks

avowed white supremacist sprayed bullets through Al Noor, where 42 died, and the smaller Linwood Avenue mosque several kilometres (miles) away.

Christchurch man Jatinder Sagar has issued a public invitation for people to join him for Friday prayers with more than 2,600 indicating support on his Facebook page.

If the mosque is not ready, the Friday prayers will be held



A digger delivers a load of gravel to the Al Noor mosque in Christchurch

across the road in the spacious Hagley Park.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has called for the nation to observe two minutes of silence on Friday and said the call to prayer would be broadcast live by the state-owned radio and television in a show of support for the Muslim community.

New Zealand women were also being encouraged to wear headscarves as a gesture of solidarity with Muslims on Friday, the Muslim holy day.

"We are going to pray here on Friday," the Imam Gamal Fouda

told the New Zealand Herald from behind the cordon opposite the mosque.

"We will never forsake it to please those people who actually attacked us," he said.

Linwood mosque Imam Alabi Lateef Zirullah said his congregation will join the Friday prayer at Al Noor.

Sagger said the people answering his call to prayer would form a human wall outside the mosque.

"If the mosque isn't open, we will make the circle opposite the mosque in the cricket grounds,



A "Hello Brother" message left in a tree outside the Al Noor mosque in Christchurch. "Hello brother." The warm-hearted words an elderly Muslim reportedly used to greet a white supremacist gunman have become Christchurch's answer to his volley of hate. Mohammed Daoud Nabi, a 71-year-old from war-torn Afghanistan, was buried on March 21. But his supposed final words echo across this broken New Zealand city

Hagley Park," he said.

Police said they would continue to maintain a presence at

both mosques when they reopen "for the public's reassurance and safety".