

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವಿಧಾನ ಸಭೆ, ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ಹಾಗೂ ಉಲ್ಲೇಖನಾ ಶಾಖೆ  
KARNATAKA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, RESEARCH AND REFERENCE BRANCH

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ಲಾಭಿ / ವಿಷಯ : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT: Home - Shivamogga Superblast  
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## Shivamogga Superblast: Probe to reverse-read trail

RAMACHANDRA V GUNARI & MARX TEJASWI @ Shivamogga

A day after gelatin sticks loaded on a truck exploded, killing five labourers at a stone crushing unit at Hunasodu village near the city late on Thursday night, the State Government has ordered a high-level inquiry into the incident. The intensity of the blast was such that the sound could be heard till an aerial distance of 70-80 km.

Due to the explosion, the lorry on which the gelatin sticks were stocked, was completely blown to bits while the bodies of the five labourers were strewn across the site. Many pieces of the lorry were found

on the roof of a house situated about one km away from the spot. The dust raised due to the explosion had engulfed trees all around and the rooftops of the temporary sheds constructed at the site.

Shivamogga Deputy Commissioner K B Sivakumar told The New Indian Express that the explosion occurred because of a jelly-kind of explosive stored in a stationary lorry at the stone crushing unit. "We do not know yet whether the crushing unit was operating legally or illegally. It will be investigated. But one thing is clear that there was illegal storing of explosives at the unit," he said.



Bomb squad personnel scan the blast site on the outskirts of Shivamogga city on Friday | SHIMOGA NANDAN

### ₹5 lakh relief for victims' kin

SHIVAMOGGA: Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa has announced ₹5 lakh compensation each to the immediate kin of the labourers who were killed in the explosion. The CM said a bomb disposal squad and a mine detecting team have been sent to the blast site. "We will take suitable action once the preliminary report is out. I have instructed the Shivamogga Deputy Commissioner to release compensation to the kin of the five deceased. I'll also be visiting the spot on Saturday," he said.

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# Cong demands thorough investigation into blast

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THE stone crushing unit at Hunasodu village is just 8 km away from Shivamogga city. While the bodies of five people were retrieved from the spot, the exact number of casualties is still unclear. Also, what triggered the explosion or where the explosives were sourced from are yet to be established. A bomb detection and disposal squad from Mangaluru arrived at the spot around 11 am. Explosive experts from Bengaluru were also brought in to probe the incident.

The victims include Javed, Praveen and Manjunath from Bhadravathi and Pavan from Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh. The identity of the fifth victim is yet to be known. Earlier reports said these labourers were from Bihar. Sources said the crushing unit area is owned by one Avinash Kulkarni who had sub-leased it to Sudhakar and Narasimha. The police have taken all the three to custody.

When the explosion was heard on Thursday night, around 10.20 pm, residents ran out of their houses in panic. While some suspected that it was due to a tremor, other felt that it could have been a cloud burst. Deputy Commissioner Sivakumar, SP KM Shantharaju and other senior officers had rushed to the spot around 11.30 pm.

On Friday morning, MP B Y Raghavendra, along with Shivamogga Rural MLA Ashok Naik, visited the spot followed by District Minister K S Eshwarappa and MLC Ayanur Manjunath.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Opposition leader in Karnataka, Siddaramaiah, and local Congress leaders have demanded a thorough investigation into the incident. Siddaramaiah urged the state government to curb illegal mining across the state. "I urge the chief minister to initiate an impartial and strict enquiry about the incident,

and punish the guilty," he said. Local leaders held Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa and District Minister K S Eshwarappa responsible and demanded their resignation. District Congress Committee president H S Sundaresh claimed that the explosives were brought illegally from Bihar and Tamil Nadu. "Some BJP leaders are into illegal stone mining and they have the protection of the BJP government," he alleged.

Eshwar Naik, a house owner near the quarry, said, "Explosions was common in our area as there are many stone quarrying and crushing units. But on Thursday night, the explosion was huge and we came out of the house and saw dust rising to the sky. On Friday morning, I found pieces of the lorry on the roof of my house." The tiled-roof house of Meenakshi Bai, mother of Eshwar Naik, situated next to his house, suffered some damage with some of the tiles being blown off.

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