



STATE | PAGE 03

Relief likely from scorching heat in Telangana: IMD



NATION | PAGE 05

SC raps Rahul Gandhi for remarks on Savarkar  
But Apex Court stays the criminal proceedings against him.



WORLD | PAGE 07

Top world leaders to attend Pope's funeral today

## In a nutshell

### Pak refuses to handover BSF man

**NEW DELHI:** Pakistan Rangers refused to hand over a BSF jawan, who inadvertently strayed to the other side, for the third straight day on Friday and remained non-committal on his whereabouts, official sources said. The jawan, Constable Purnam Sahu of the 182nd BSF, was apprehended by the Rangers from a farming field along the Ferozepur district on Wednesday. The BSF sought flag meetings but there was no response.

### BJP wins Delhi Mayor post

**NEW DELHI:** BJP's Raja Iqbal Singh was elected as Delhi's new mayor on Friday, marking the saffron party's return to power in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi after two years. Singh defeated Congress candidate Mandeep Singh by a margin of 125 votes to secure the top civic post, while the AAP boycotted the election. Congress withdrew nomination, clearing the way for BJP's Jai Bhagwan Yadav to be elected as Deputy Mayor.

### 7 militants held in Manipur

**IMPHAL:** Security forces in Manipur arrested seven militants belonging to different banned outfits from Imphal East and Imphal West districts, officials said on Friday. A police official said the arrested militants belonged to different factions of the Kangleipak Communist Party, the People's Liberation Army and the United National Liberation Front. They were involved in kidnapping, forcible collection of money from contractors.

# States told to deport Pak nationals before deadline

Amit Shah dials Chief Ministers; hunt for terrorists continues



Indian citizen Zakiya Firdous sees off her husband Munadi Ahmad, a Pakistani citizen, to cross over to Pakistan, near Attari-Wagah border, on Friday.



Muslims stage a protest condemning the Pahalagam terrorist attack after Friday prayers at the Jama Masjid in Delhi. — Photo: PTI

PTI

NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday called up the Chief Ministers of all the States and asked them to ensure that no Pakistani stays in India beyond the deadline set for leaving the country, sources said. India on Thursday announced revoking all visas issued to Pakistani nationals from April 27 and advised Indian nationals residing in Pakistan to return home at the earliest, as tensions between the two countries escalated over the Pahalagam terror attack that killed 26 people, mostly tourists, on Tuesday. The Home Minister personally called up the Chief Ministers of all the States and asked them to ensure that no Pakistani stays in India beyond the deadline, sources said. The Chief Ministers were also told to identify the Pakistani nationals staying in their respective areas and ensure their deportation, the sources said. The revocation of visas does not apply to the long-term visas already issued to Hindu Pakistani nationals, which “remain valid”. India announced suspending visa services to Pakistani nationals with immediate effect over the

## INDIA FOR LONG TERM PLAN TO STOP WATER FLOW TO PAK

**NEW DELHI:** The government is working on a strategy to ensure that not a single drop of water flows from India into Pakistan, Jal Shakti Minister C R Paatil asserted on Friday following a high-level meeting chaired by Home Minister Amit Shah. Paatil said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has issued a slew of directives, and the meeting was held to follow up on them and Shah made several suggestions at the meeting for their effective implementation. “We will ensure that not a single drop of water flows into Pakistan from India,” he said after the meeting.

yond the deadline, sources said. The Chief Ministers were also told to identify the Pakistani nationals staying in their respective areas and ensure their deportation, the sources said. The revocation of visas does not apply to the long-term visas already issued to Hindu Pakistani nationals, which “remain valid”. India announced suspending visa services to Pakistani nationals with immediate effect over the

ensure their deportation, the sources said. The revocation of visas does not apply to the long-term visas already issued to Hindu Pakistani nationals, which “remain valid”. India announced suspending visa services to Pakistani nationals with immediate effect over the

## PAK MINISTER ADMITS FUNDING, TRAINING TERRORISTS

**LONDON:** Pakistan Defence Minister Khwaja Asif has admitted the country's history of supporting, training and funding terrorist organisations as “dirty work” for the West, a mistake for which he said Pakistan had suffered. In an interview with Sky News, news presenter Yalda Hakim questioned Asif on Pakistan's response and stance on terrorism in the aftermath of the terrorist attack in Pahalagam that killed 26 people earlier this week. “You do admit, sir, that Pakistan has had a long history of backing these terrorists,” asked Hakim. (SEE PAGE 2)

cross-border links to the Pahalagam attack, the worst terror strike targeting civilians in the country since the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack. Meanwhile, a combing operation to track down three escaped terrorists entered its second day on Friday, with security agencies strengthening the multi-layered cordon. Forces are scouring the forest area in Udhampur district, where the terrorists were believed to be hiding, as well as areas in Kishtwar, Kathua, Rajouri, and Poonch.

“The search operation by the army, police, and CRPF special forces has been ongoing in Dudu-Basantgarh. It is underway to track down the terrorists on the run,” said a security official. The operation is backed by aerial surveillance. (SEE PAGE 2)

STATE BUREAU

Hyderabad

BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Friday rejected the National Dam Safety Authority's (NDSA) report on Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla bargages as politically motivated, timed deliberately to damage his party's image ahead of its silver jubilee celebrations.

He questioned its credibility, pointing out that no on-site inspection or testing was conducted at Medigadda before the report was finalised.

“This is not a NDSA report, but an NDA report, jointly authored by the BJP and Congress,” he said, pointing out that although the report was submitted in December, it was released just days before the BRS public meeting at Warangal, raising doubts about its intent.

In an informal interaction with the media ahead of the silver jubilee meeting, Rama Rao cited the NDSA's selective action. He questioned the Authority's silence during the Morbi bridge collapse in Gujarat, which killed 141 people, and its inaction in Bihar, where bridge collapses were frequent. “Even after 60 days of the SLBC tunnel collapse, they did not visit the site. Nor did they inspect the Sunkishala project after retaining wall collapse. Yet here, a politically prepared report emerges overnight. The agenda is clear — to malign BRS,” he said, adding that after the April 27 meeting, he would expose more scams under the Congress regime where more BJP MPs were involved and working hand-in-glove with Revanth Reddy.

He maintained that the Congress remained BRS's primary opponent in Telangana, dismissing the BJP's relevance. “The BJP's eight MPs from Telangana lost in the Assembly elections and only won the Lok Sabha polls due to the fading Modi factor,” he said, rejecting the BJP's “double-engine sarkaar” slogan, stating Telangana's “single-engine” BRS government delivered better governance.

On the BRS opting out of recent MLC elections, Rama Rao termed it a strategic decision, noting limited voter registration among party leaders in the Graduates and Teachers constituencies. (SEE PAGE 2)

**THIS IS NOT A NDSA REPORT, BUT AN NDA REPORT, JOINTLY AUTHORED BY THE BJP AND CONGRESS RELEASED JUST DAYS BEFORE THE BRS MEETING**  
—K T RAMA RAO  
BRS WORKING PRESIDENT



# Congress uses distorted India map, faces backlash

STATE BUREAU

Hyderabad

The Congress government faced major embarrassment on Friday with its Bharat Summit here triggering a controversy after using posters that had an India map without PoJK and Ladakh.

A video of the same, shared on X by Congress Munugode MLA Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy, went viral, attracting severe backlash, with many even pointing out that this amounted to treason.

The backlash saw organisers rushing to tear off the posters that featured the incorrect map. Rajgopal Reddy, who had shared the



video about the summit, with a visual from the video clearly showing the map without PoJK and Ladakh as he passes by, also deleted the video from his social media. Many commented on X that with several hundreds of delegates report-

edly set to attend the Bharat Summit, such an act from Congress should not be viewed as a minor error.

The BJP's State unit too was among those who did not waste time attacking the Congress over the incident. (SEE PAGE 2)

# Waqf Act: Centre opposes ‘stay’

NEW DELHI

The Centre on Friday defended the amended Waqf Act in the Supreme Court and opposed any “blanket stay” by the court on a “law having presumption of constitutionality passed by Parliament”.

In a preliminary 1,332-page affidavit, the Centre urged the top court to dismiss the pleas challenging the validity of Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, pointing out a “mischievous false narrative” surrounding certain provisions.

“While this court would examine these challenges when the cases are heard, a blanket stay (or a partial stay) without being aware of the adverse consequences of such an order in a generality of cases (even on members

SC must dismiss the pleas challenging the validity of Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, pointing out a “mischievous false narrative” surrounding certain provisions

of the Muslim community itself) were the petitions to be unsuccessful, would be uncalled for, especially in the context of the presumption of validity of such laws,” it argued. The Centre, as a result, urged a Bench headed by Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna, set to hear pleas for passing interim directions on May 5, not to stay the law's provisions.

The government claimed a “shocking increase” of 116 per cent in the waqf properties since 2013. It also opposed the arguments over

the necessary registration of “waqf by user” properties till April 8, saying if the provision was interfered with by an interim order, it would amount to “creation of legislative regime by judicial order”. The affidavit rebutted the submissions that Muslims might be in the minority in the Central Waqf Council and State Waqf Boards due to the change in the law.

The law is a “valid and lawful exercise of legislative power”, one that strengthens the institution of waqf

and aligns it with constitutional principles, and facilitates the wholesome realisation of waqfs in the contemporary era, it argued.

The Centre contended it was settled position in the law that constitutional courts would not stay a statutory provision, either directly or indirectly, and decided the matter finally.

“There is a presumption of constitutionality that applies to laws made by Parliament,” it said.

The affidavit added, “Considering the settled constitutional principles of presumption of constitutionality, intrinsic value behind democratic processes and high threshold to be met before passing any interim orders, it would be in the fitness of things to decline any interim orders.”

# Nearing 60 years, duo eye EAPCET

YUVRAJ AKULA

Hyderabad

Two individuals nearing the age of 60 are set to compete with teenagers for admission into professional programmes, including engineering.

Born in the 1960s, the older adults registered for the Telangana Engineering, Agriculture and Pharmacy Common Entrance Test (TG EAPCET) 2025, which is scheduled to be held from April 29.

## No Age limit

As there is no upper age limit for pursuing under-

graduate engineering and pharmacy courses in the State, a 58-year-old, whose name is being withheld to protect privacy, has applied to appear in the agriculture and pharmacy entrance test. Another 56-year-old registered for the engineering entrance test this year.

To be eligible for engineering and pharmacy courses, candidates should have completed 16 years of age, as of December 31 of the year of admission, and there is no upper age limit.

As per the notification, the engineering aspirants should have studied and cleared subjects — mathe-

matics, physics and chemistry — in Intermediate. In case of agriculture and pharmacy stream, candidates should have pursued botany, zoology, physics and chemistry subjects.

## Number of attempts

There is no limit on the number of attempts a candidate can take the tests. Due to this provision, several older adults and senior citizens are registering for the entrance tests. Last year, a 54-year-old registered for the entrance test. The previous year, a 56-year-old man applied for EAPCET. As the registrations concluded,

around 3.06 lakh applications, including 2.20 lakh for engineering and around 86,000 for AP stream, were received.

## Halltickets

Meanwhile, the JNTU-Hyderabad, which is holding the TG EAPCET 2025, released the hall tickets that can be downloaded from the website <https://eapcet.tgche.ac.in/>. The entrance test will be conducted from April 29, with AP stream scheduled for April 29 and 30 and engineering test on May 2, 3 and 4. Results will be declared in about 10 days into the examination.

## All arrangements in place for BRS Warangal meet

STATE BUREAU

Hyderabad

BRS working president KT Rama Rao said all arrangements have been made for the party's silver jubilee public meeting at Elkathurthy on April 27, which is set to be one of the largest gatherings in the party's 25-year history. Party chief K Chandrashekhar Rao will address his first public meeting in several months. “People are eager to see and listen to him again,” he said. (REPORT PAGE 4)

# Former ISRO chief Kasturirangan passes away

BENGALURU



Former ISRO chief K Kasturirangan, who was at the helm of the space agency for nearly a decade, passed away in Bengaluru on Friday, officials said. He was 84 and is survived by two sons, family sources said, and added that he was suffering from age-related ailments for the past few months. “He left for heavenly abode this morning at his residence in Bengaluru. His body will be kept

at Raman Research Institute (RRI) for paying last respects on April 27,” the officials said.

Condoling his death, Droupadi Murmu said on X: “Sad-  
dened to learn that Dr Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan is no more. As head of ISRO, he played a stellar role in the evolution of India's space programme.” She also noted that Kasturirangan helped draft the National Education Policy (NEP), which is already making a profound

impact on the shaping of the next generation.

In his condolence message, Prime Minister Narendra Modi described him as a “towering figure in India's scientific and educational journey.” The space scientist's visionary leadership and selfless contribution to the nation will always be remembered, Modi said on X. He said Kasturirangan served ISRO with great diligence, steering India's space programme to new heights, for which he received global recognition. (REPORT PAGE 5)