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15 die after consuming spurious liquor in Amritsar



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Trump asks Iran to take new path

Also lifts US sanctions on Syria; signs several deals with Saudi



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BCCI to rope in foreign boards as IPL begins this weekend

In a nutshell

India expels Pakistani official

NEW DELHI: India on Tuesday expelled a Pakistani official working at the Pakistan High Commission for indulging in activities not in keeping with his official status. The External Affairs Ministry said that the official has been given 24 hours to leave India. The action came amid heightened tension between the two countries following their four-day military confrontation. India also issued a demarche to Pakistani Charge d' Affaires in New Delhi on the activities of the official, said a press release. [PTI](#)

Voter card issues resolved: EC

NEW DELHI: The Election Commission has resolved the issue of voter cards having similar numbers and those with such cards have been issued fresh ones with new numbers, sources said Tuesday. The number of similar electoral photo identity card or EPIC numbers found were "miniscule", averaging to around one in four polling stations, they said. During the field-level verification, it was found that holders of such similar EPIC numbers were genuine electors in different assembly constituencies.

New GO on TGIIC sparks industry fears

Move to convert it into public entity may hit ease of land allocation for new ventures, say sources

PS DILEEP
HYDERABAD

The Congress government's decision to convert the Telangana State Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TGIIC) into a public limited company has raised serious concerns within industrial circles. Industry stakeholders fear this move could severely impact the ease of land allocation for new industrial ventures, an area TGIIC was specifically set up to streamline.

Established as the nodal agency to spur industrial growth, TGIIC has so far played a pivotal role in developing sector-specific infrastructure and allocating land in sync with industry needs. However, after its conversion into a public limited company, industry sources caution that every major decision, especially those involving land allocation, will now require disclosure to shareholders and, in many cases, their approval.

"As long as the government retains majority share-

Every decision, especially those involving land allocation, will now require disclosure to shareholders and, in many cases, their approval

holding, it can use the Board of Directors to approve land allocations to various industries. But once more shareholders enter the fray, the process could become cumbersome and commercialised, defeating the original intent," remarked a top functionary of CII Telangana State Council.

Adding to the worry, the government is reportedly planning to raise funds from the stock market by issuing bonds against TGIIC's land assets. This raises the risk that, in the event of financial distress, industrial lands could be liquidated to repay shareholders, leaving potential investors and manufacturers in limbo.

The previous BRS government had pooled over 1.5 lakh acres to create one of the country's largest land banks under TGIIC's control for industrial develop-

ment. Majority of the prime land is located in Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy and Medchal districts. Of this, around 30,000 acres were allocated to various industries during the BRS regime, while more than 1.2 lakh acres remain under TGIIC. The current market value of these lands is difficult to estimate, but industry watchers agree it runs into tens of thousands of crores.

Alarm bells began ringing after the government quietly issued an order on April 15 converting TGIIC into a public limited company. Many view this as a desperate attempt to raise funds following the failure to monetise 400 acres in Kancha Gachibowli and the inability to secure adequate traditional market loans, with the Chief Minister himself admitting it publicly. With the issuance of bonds now tied

to the value of lands held by TGIIC, industrialists are warning that the government's approach which is more focused on asset monetisation than on industrial facilitation, could prove disastrous. The conversion of TGIIC into a publicly traded entity may offer short-term fiscal relief, but at the potential cost of long-term industrial growth, a tradeoff many in the industry are unwilling to accept.

"Land is one of the crucial components required to attract investors besides power, water and law and order. Land meant for industry could soon become a tool for financial speculation, which could have adverse impact on industrial investments," a senior official of TGIIC admitted.

Further, officials do not rule out possible legal complications as these lands were acquired from public or the government for specific purposes i.e. establishment of industries of different sectors and using them for any other purpose could create legal issues.

New India won't tolerate terror: PM

Says Lakshman Rekha against terrorism is clear; India will respond if hit by terror attack

NEW DELHI

With an S-400 missile defence system in the backdrop, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent a firm message Tuesday from Adampur Air Base to Pakistan: Not only have you failed to harm any of India's military installations but you will be annihilated if terrorism continues from your soil.

In his first speech to the Armed Forces since Operation Sindoor, Modi lauded the military for humbling Pakistan in the four-day engagement that resulted in the destruction of nine terror sites, killing of over 100 terrorists and damage to its eight military installations.

Tough talk

"Aatank ke viruddh Bharat ki Lakshman Rekha ekdam spast hai. Ab phir koi terror attack hua to Bharat jawab dega, pakka jawab dega. (India's Lakshman Rekha against terrorism is now crystal clear. India will respond and definitely respond if hit by a terror attack)," he said, in an over 27-minute speech which echoed the message of his address to the nation on Monday night. But the significance of the speech was immense. It was delivered from the Adampur base, merely 100 km from the Pakistan border, which Pakistan claimed to have destroyed along with the S-400 missile defence system. India had rubbished the claims and TV cameras following Modi corroborated that. [\(SEE PAGE 2\)](#)



Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets Indian Air Force officers at Adampur on Tuesday. — Photo: AP

Let's trade goods, not nukes: Trump tells India, Pakistan

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump, on Tuesday, reiterated the US' role in brokering peace between India and Pakistan, saying he told the two sides to "not trade nuclear missiles (and) trade the things that you make so beautifully". President Trump is in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on his first leg of a three-leg tour of West Asia, on his first major foreign policy visit abroad after returning to the White House for a non-consecutive second term.

"Fellas, come on," Trump said as he told India and Pakistan, "Let's make a deal. Let's do some trading. Let's not trade nuclear missiles. Let's trade the things that you make so beautifully." "Just days ago, my administration successfully brokered a historic ceasefire to stop the escalating violence between India and Pakistan, and I used trade to a large extent to do it," he said in a major foreign policy speech with the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman in the audience. [\(SEE PAGE 2\)](#)

Kashmir bilateral issue: MEA

NEW DELHI: India said its long-standing position on Kashmir has been that it is a bilateral issue between New Delhi and Islamabad and there is no change of this stand. The assertion came against the backdrop of US President Donald Trump's renewed offer to mediate on the Kashmir issue. "We have a longstanding national position that any issues pertaining to the Indian union territory of Jammu and Kashmir have to be addressed by India and Pakistan bilaterally," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. "That stated policy has not changed. As you are aware, the outstanding matter is the vacation of illegally occupied Indian territory by Pakistan," he said. [\(SEE PAGE 2\)](#)

My loyalty to KCR undisputed: Harish

STATE BUREAU
Hyderabad



Senior BRS leader and former Minister T Harish Rao on Tuesday dismissed reports suggesting internal rifts within the party and speculation about his possible exit, calling them utterly baseless. He urged people not to believe in the false propaganda against him, asserting that he remained a loyal soldier of BRS and party chief K Chandrashekhara Rao.

He reminded that he had already condemned the false propaganda, while party leaders Dasoju Sravan and Errolla Srinivas had filed a police complaint regarding the matter. "I have also requested DGP to take immediate action against

those spreading fake news," he stated. Harish Rao reiterated his loyalty to Chandrashekhara Rao and BRS. "I have said it hundreds of times - K Chandrashekhara Rao is our leader, and I am a disciplined worker who strictly follows his directions," he remarked.

On speculation about leadership changes within the party, he declared that if Chandrashekhara Rao decides to hand over the reins of the party to KT Rama Rao, he would follow that decision unconditionally. "My loyalty to Chandrashekhara Rao and the party is undisputed." Rejecting rumours of defection, he asserted that he was neither quitting the BRS, nor joining any other party.

SRINAGAR RETURNS TO NORMAL



Life in Srinagar city and elsewhere in the Kashmir Valley returned to normal as schools, colleges, universities, markets, transport, and other businesses started functioning normally on Tuesday after India-Pakistan tensions, in Srinagar, on Tuesday. Except for schools in border areas, educational institutions across the region functioned normally. — Photo: PTI

India rolls out e-passports with upgraded security

NEW DELHI

India on Tuesday officially launched in 13 cities the first phase of its next-generation e-passport initiative, combining advanced electronic technology with the traditional paper passport format to enhance identity verification and strengthen travel document security.

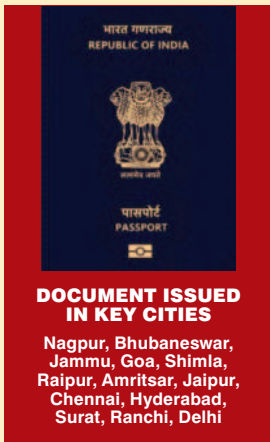
According to the Ministry of External Affairs, this project began under a pilot phase in conjunction with the Passport Seva Programme (PSP) Version 2.0, which was initiated in April last year. The MEA confirmed that this is the first stage of a nationwide implementation expected to reach all Passport Seva Kendras by mid-2025.

The e-passports are currently being issued in several cities, including Nagpur, Bhubaneswar, Jammu,

Next-gen features

THE E-PASSPORT COMBINES ELECTRONIC TECH WITH PAPER FORMAT

- High-tech document features a gold-coloured symbol below the front cover
- Embedded with Radio Frequency Identification chip
- Includes built-in antenna
- Ensures secure storage of biometric, personal data
- Reduces risk of tampering, identity forgery
- Nationwide implementation likely by mid-2025



Goa, Shimla, Raipur, Amritsar, Jaipur, Chennai, Hyderabad, Surat, Ranchi, and Delhi.

Tamil Nadu, notably, began issuing e-passports on March 3, 2025, at the

Chennai Regional Passport Office. These passports are distinctly identifiable from regular ones, featuring a gold-coloured symbol printed below the front cover. [\(SEE PAGE 2\)](#)

BRS stir against government

STATE BUREAU
Hyderabad

BRS working president KT Rama Rao announced on Tuesday that the party would launch a series of mass agitations against the corrupt and deceptive rule of the Congress government in the State. He charged the Congress government with large-

scale deception, betrayal and misrule, which would be exposed during these agitations.

"The Warangal meeting marked the beginning of the end of the Congress government. The BRS is preparing for an extensive phase of agitations across Telangana," he declared, calling upon the party cadre to intensify their efforts and take the

message of the Congress government's betrayal to every household in Telangana.

At a key meeting with BRS leaders from the erstwhile Warangal district in Hyderabad on Tuesday, Rama Rao lambasted the Congress for failing to deliver on its promises, especially towards farmers and unemployed youth. [\(SEE PAGE 2\)](#)

Check QR codes to identify spurious medicines

CITY BUREAU
Hyderabad

Did you know that while purchasing medicines from a medical shop, you can check whether the drug is spurious or counterfeit? Yes, the general public can now ascertain the quality of drugs by checking out the QR code on the product packaging itself. With Ministry of Health and Family

Welfare issuing a notification making it mandatory for drug companies to print/affix QR codes on their packaging labels of drugs, the general public now has the facility to independently verify the spurious or counterfeit nature of medicines.

The mandatory QR codes, which have been enforced and regulated by Central Drugs Standards Control

Organisation since August 1, 2023, will enable the general public to be proactive and alert Telangana State Drug Control Administration (TSDCA), so that they can take action. In its advisory on spurious drugs, the TSDCA has urged the public, hospitals, pharmacies and even other stakeholders in the public healthcare to use the Barcode/QR Code before purchasing or during

administration. "Checking QR codes will help curb the menace of spurious/counterfeit drugs in the market and protect the health and safety of citizens.

We are also encouraging consumers to report any suspicious or unverified drug products lacking proper Bar Code/QR Code labelling or those displaying mismatched details to us," DG, TSDCA, Shahnawaz

Qasim said. General public should also note that mandatory QR codes by MOHFW are required for 300 most popular medical formulations and brands, which are manufactured on or after August 1, 2023. In case of suspicion, people can report to local Drugs Inspector or the AD, DCA, whose contact numbers/office addresses are available <https://dca.telangana.gov.in>