

Funeral Preparations Begin For Ayatollah Khamenei

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Iran is preparing to lay its slain Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei, to rest in the holy city of Mashhad as the impact of his death continues to reverberate across the world.

According to Iran's semi-official Fars news agency, Ayatollah Khamenei will be buried in Mashhad in northeastern Iran. Mashhad, in Khorasan province, is the city of his birth, and he will be laid to rest near the revered shrine of Imam Reza, where his father is also buried. Mashhad is among the most important religious centres of Islam and attracts millions of pilgrims each year to the shrine of Imam Reza, the eighth Shia Imam.

Iran has announced a 40-day period of national mourning following the assassination of the 86-year-old leader in a joint Israeli-US operation. While the exact date of the burial has not been officially confirmed, Iranian media reports suggest the funeral may be delayed as US & Israel continue relentless bombing of Tehran and other cities.

Authorities in the morning announced that a large farewell ceremony spanning three days will begin at Mussala Imam Khomeini in Tehran's outskirts from Wednesday evening but it was later postponed.

Similar delays were seen in the region earlier in Lebanon where the funeral of Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah was postponed for weeks because of Israeli bombardment.

Meanwhile, according to new reports, Ayatollah Khamenei, along with his wife, was critically injured in the US-Israeli



attack which killed his daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren.

His representative in India, Abdul Majid Hakim Elahi said in an interview that the leader died in hospital during treatment a day after the US-Israeli airstrikes targeted his residence and office compound on Saturday.

"At the time of the attack, Ayatollah Khamenei's daughter and son-in-law and grand children were martyred on the spot. However, Ayatollah Khamenei was critically injured. He was taken to the hospital, where he passed away during treatment the following day," Elahi was quoted as saying.

Following the leader's assassination, Iran's leadership has temporarily been entrusted to a three-member interim council until the Assembly of Experts elects his successor. The council includes the president, the head of the judiciary and a jurist from the powerful Guardian Council, which oversees legislation and vets electoral candidates.

According to Fars, an official familiar with the process said that, for security reasons, the Assembly of Experts' final meeting to appoint the next Supreme Leader may be postponed until after | **More on P6**

Fear, Anxiety As Kashmiri Students Remain Stranded In Iran

Students In Tehran, Qom, Urmia Report Explosions Nearby; Families Seek Evacuation

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Fear and anxiety have gripped families across Jammu and Kashmir as hundreds of students from the Valley, enrolled in medical and other professional courses in Iran, continue to face an uncertain security situation amid escalating tensions in the region.

Students studying in cities such as Tehran, Qom and Urmia are living under constant fear as the security situation in different parts of the country remains volatile.

Parents said that although some students were recently relocated from Tehran to Qom by the Indian Embassy as a precautionary measure, the overall situation remains alarming.

"There is a widespread sense of fear and helplessness. Even after relocation, no place appears safe at the moment," said a parent from Srinagar.

Reports of loud explosions, including one near a student dormitory in Urmia, have further heightened concerns. Students said areas around universities have been affected, leaving many of them | **More on P6**

Precautionary Curbs To Continue Across Kashmir Till Thursday

2G Internet In Place; Security Tightened In Sensitive Areas After Iran Developments

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Precautionary restrictions imposed in several parts of Kashmir earlier this week will continue to remain in force till Thursday, officials said.

The curbs were put in place following recent developments in West Asia, including US and Israeli strikes on Iran that reportedly led to the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei,



triggering protests and public gatherings in parts of the Valley.

An official said the situation was being reviewed regularly, but restrictions would remain in place as a precautionary measure to

maintain law and order. "Security arrangements have been strengthened in sensitive areas, including parts of downtown Srinagar and Lal Chowk, to prevent any untoward | **More on P6**

WEST ASIA FLIGHT DISRUPTIONS

J&K Umrah Pilgrims Stranded In Saudi Arabia

Agencies

Srinagar: Scores of Umrah pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir are reportedly stranded in Saudi Arabia following widespread flight disruptions triggered by the escalating conflict in West Asia.

Sources said the affected pilgrims are presently in Mecca, Medina and Jeddah after completing or nearing completion of their Umrah pilgrimage. Scheduled return flights to India were either cancelled or delayed due to air-space restrictions and operational disruptions across the region.

Family members of several pilgrims in the Valley said they have been in contact with their relatives, who are currently staying in hotels arranged earlier for the pilgrimage. Many are awaiting fresh travel advisories and revised flight schedules.

Officials indicated that Indian diplomatic missions in Saudi Arabia are closely monitoring the situation and are in touch with tour operators and stranded nationals. The Embassy of India is understood to be coordinating with Saudi authorities and airlines to facilitate the safe return of Indian pilgrims once normal flight operations resume.

Authorities have advised pilgrims to remain in contact with their | **More on P6**

War Reaches India's Backyard; Iran Warship Sunk Off Sri Lanka



Agencies

Colombo- An Iranian warship that had been welcomed at a multinational naval exercise in India just weeks ago now lies at the bottom of the Indian Ocean, after being

struck and sunk by a United States submarine off Sri Lanka's southern coast in an incident that has sharply underscored how the expanding Iran war is spilling into waters close to India.

The Iranian | **More on P6**

JKCA CASE

ED Plea Rejected; Charges To be Framed Against Farooq, Others

M Ahmad

Srinagar: A court here has dismissed a plea filed by the Enforcement Directorate seeking the addition of charges under Sections 411 and 424 of the erstwhile Ranbir Penal Code (RPC) against Farooq Abdullah, patron of the National Conference and former chief minister, along with five others in connection with a money laundering probe linked to the alleged multi-crore Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association fund misappropriation case.

However, the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate Srinagar Ms. Tabassum said that the essential ingredients of offences under Sections 120-B, 406 and 409 RPC are prima facie made out against senior Abdullah, the former JKCA president, and other accused-Mohammad Saleem Khan (the then JKCA general secretary), Ahsan Ahmad Mirza (the then treasurer), Manzoor Gazanfar Ali, Bashir Ahmad Misgar (an executive in the J&K Bank) and Gulzar Ahmad Beigh.

The court observed that the charge sheet in the | **More on P6**

Day Temps 7-10°C Above Normal Across J&K: IMD

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Day temperatures across Jammu and Kashmir remained several degrees above normal on Wednesday, while most parts of the Union Territory recorded no rainfall, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

According to the IMD's evening bulletin, Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 20.5 degrees Celsius, which was 7.5 degrees above normal, while the minimum settled at 4.2 degrees Celsius, 1.7 degrees above normal.

Qazigund recorded a maximum temperature of 22.0 degrees Celsius, 9.4 degrees above normal, with the minimum at 2.2 degrees Celsius. Pahalgam registered a high of 18.9 degrees Celsius, which was 8.9 degrees above normal, while the minimum temperature dipped to minus 0.1 degrees Celsius.

Kupwara recorded a maximum of 19.8 degrees Celsius, 7.3 degrees above | **More on P6**

Express Grief Peacefully, Maintain Peace: CM Interacts With Civil Society Members Over Iran Situation



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday met religious leaders and members of civil society in Srinagar to discuss the situation following recent developments in West Asia and urged people to express their grief in a peaceful and responsible manner.

According to the Chief Minister's Office, the interaction was held in light of the concerns being expressed across the Valley

after the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a US Israel airstrike.

"Chief Minister today interacted with religious leaders and members of civil society in Srinagar in light of recent developments in West Asia. The participants expressed concern over the situation and conveyed their condolences over the loss of lives in Iran," the CMO said in a post on X. During the meeting, Omar stressed the | **More on P6**

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AI Set To Make Medical Scan Reports Twice As Easy To Understand For Patients

Press Trust Of India

Artificial intelligence could soon help patients better understand complex medical scan results, making them far easier to comprehend without losing clinical accuracy, according to a major new study by the University of Sheffield. The research found that when radiology reports for X-rays, CT scans, and MRIs were rewritten using advanced AI systems such as ChatGPT, patients found them almost twice as easy to understand compared with the original versions. Analysis showed that the reading level dropped from "university level" to one more closely aligned with the comprehension of an 11-13-year-old school pupil. The findings suggest that AI-assisted explanations could become a standard companion to medical reports, improving transparency and trust across healthcare systems, including the National Health Service (NHS). Researchers reviewed 38 studies published between 2022 and 2025, covering more than 12,000 radiology reports simplified using AI. These rewritten reports were evaluated by patients, members of the public, and clinicians to assess both patient understanding and clinical accuracy. Traditionally, radiology reports are written for doctors rather than patients. However, initiatives promoting patient-centred care, such as the NHS App, along with policies mandating greater transparency of medical records, have expanded patient access to these reports. Lead author of the study, Dr Samer Alabed, Senior Clinical Research Fellow at the University of Sheffield and Honorary Consultant Cardio Radiologist at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said: "The fundamental issue with these reports is that they are not written with patients in mind. They are often filled with technical jargon and abbreviations that can be easily misunderstood, leading to unnecessary anxiety, false reassurance, and confusion. Patients with lower health literacy or English as a second language are particularly disadvantaged. Clinicians frequently have to use valuable appointment time explaining report terminology instead of focusing on care and treatment. Even small time savings per patient could add up to significant benefits across the NHS." While doctors reviewing these AI-simplified reports found that the vast majority were accurate and complete, around one percent contained errors, such as incorrect diagnoses. This shows that, while highly promising, the approach still requires careful oversight. Of the 38 studies reviewed, none were conducted in the UK or within NHS settings—a gap that Dr Alabed says the research team now aims to address. "This research has highlighted several key priorities. The most important is the need for real-world testing in NHS clinical workflows to properly assess safety, efficiency, and patient outcomes," he said. "This includes human-oversight models, where clinicians review and approve AI-generated explanations before they are shared with patients. Our long-term goal is not to replace clinicians but to support clearer, kinder, and more equitable communication in healthcare," he added. The research underscores the University of Sheffield's ambition to translate ideas into real-world impact, reflecting a commitment to independent thinking and shared innovation in healthcare.



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Loud Music Linked To Permanent Hearing Loss, Warned AIIMS Experts



Press Trust Of India

Prolonged and excessive exposure to loud music and other sounds through loudspeakers, headphones and other personal audio devices can lead to early and irreparable hearing loss, experts at AIIMS, Delhi said on Monday.

Speaking on the eve of World Hearing Day, Dr Kapil Sikka, professor of ENT at AIIMS, Delhi said that a decline in hearing ability caused by prolonged exposure to loud sounds often develops slowly, which is why many people fail to notice it in the early stages. He emphasised that such damage is irreparable but preventable.

Dr Rakesh Kumar, head of the Department of ENT, said that to prevent hearing loss, personal audio devices should be used at a volume of less than 60 per cent of the maximum limit and a break should be taken after listening for about 60 minutes.

"Higher the noise level, shorter should be the duration of exposure to avoid hearing loss. This will prevent cumulative hearing loss burden," Dr Kumar stated.

Awareness of preventable causes of hearing loss such as noise-induced hearing loss, recreational loud activities and overuse of personal listening devices need to be emphasised to decrease its rising burden, said Dr Poonam Sagar, assistant professor of ENT. In a special appeal to the youth, experts highlighted taking care of noise-induced hearing loss. Doctors also called for prioritising early hearing screening and intervention, so that children with hearing impairment receive timely support. "Early detection can lead to early treatment and better outcomes," said Dr Kumar.

He also emphasised on detection of hearing loss in newborns - neonatal hearing screening. "At our institute, we are doing universal neonatal hearing screening. School-going children with hearing loss should be supported by peers and society," he said.

Dr Sikka emphasised early detection of hearing loss in neonates. "Babies diagnosed with profound hearing loss can be rehabilitated with cochlear implant in most of the cases. Advances like auditory brain stem implant have facilitated hearing restoration in cases with more complex nerve deafness," Dr Sikka added.

The theme for World Hearing Day this year, "From Communities to Classrooms - Hearing Care for All Children," highlights the importance of early detection of hearing loss and timely intervention to ensure that every child has the opportunity to develop speech, language and learning abilities to their full potential.

Hearing impairment in childhood, if left unidentified, can adversely affect communication skills, academic progress and overall psychosocial development. World Hearing Day also calls for understanding the burden of hearing loss and its common causes that need to be addressed.

AIIMS, New Delhi has consistently worked towards comprehensive hearing healthcare through structured universal newborn hearing screening programme with well-maintained database, advanced diagnostic facilities, and multidisciplinary rehabilitation services, Dr Kumar said.

The institute offers state-of-the-art cochlear implant services for children with severe to profound hearing loss, along with dedicated speech and language therapy programmes aimed at optimal auditory and verbal outcomes.

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Government of Jammu & Kashmir
SKIMS MEDICAL COLLEGE/HOSPITAL
BEMINA, SRINAGAR
 Department of Materials Management
 Email: mmo@skims.edu.in, Ph: 0194-2493226
 eNIT NO: 02 SKIMS MCH — Tender of 2025
 DATED: 03/03/2026

Sub: Abbreviated eNIT for Supply, Installation & Commissioning of Fully Automatic CBC Analyzer on Reagent Rental Basis for the Department of Pathology, SKIMS MCH Bemina.

On behalf of the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, the Principal, SKIMS Medical College & Hospital, Bemina, Srinagar, invites e-tenders from original manufacturers or their Indian subsidiaries/authorized agents (in case of imported equipment) and Indian manufacturers/their authorized dealers (in case of indigenous equipment) for the supply, installation, and commissioning of Fully Automatic CBC Analyzers on reagent rental basis for the Department of Pathology, SKIMS MCH, as per the following details:

Name of Equipment	Quantity	Tender Fee	EMD
Fully Automatic CBC Analyzer	02 Nos.	3000/-	2,00,000/-

The complete tender document is available on the e-tendering portal www.jktenders.gov.in as well as on the official websites: www.skims.ac.in and www.skimsmc.edu.in.

Tender Schedule:
 Last Date for Submission of Online Bids: 25-03-2026 by 4:00 PM
 Opening of Technical Bids: 28-03-2026 at 2:30 PM
 Clarification Date: 16-03-2026 till 4:00 PM

Note: The entire bidding process shall be conducted online through www.jktenders.gov.in. Physical submission of bids will not be accepted.

NO: SKIMS/MCH/MMD/CBC/25-/1222-28
 Materials Management Officer
 SKIMS MCH, Bemina

DIPK-NB-3485/25
 DATED: 04-03-2026

Government of Jammu and Kashmir
Department of Floriculture, Gardens & Parks
Civil Secretariat Jammu / Kashmir.
 Email id: ikfloripg@ik.gov.in

Subject: Verification of Character and Antecedents of the applicants who have applied for compassionate appointment, under Jammu and Kashmir Rehabilitation Assistance Scheme-2022, for the **Calendar Year 2025.**

NOTICE

The applicants figuring in the ANNEXURE to this notice are hereby informed to submit their E-mail IDs and contact details in the Department of Floriculture, Gardens & Parks, Civil Secretariat, Jammu (Room No. BT 6 above JK bank) / Winter Secretariat Srinagar (Room No. 529, 5th Floor), in person, within a period of twenty-one (21) days positively, for the purpose of filing up of e-verification rolls, to obtain their Character & Antecedents Reports from the Criminal Investigation Department, J&K.

If any candidate fails to report to the Department of Floriculture, Gardens & Parks, Civil Secretariat, Jammu/Winter Secretariat Srinagar, within prescribed time period, he shall forfeit the right to appointment, under the Jammu and Kashmir Rehabilitation Assistance Scheme-2022.

(Vivek Mohan) J&KAS
 Additional Secretary to the Government,
 Department of Floriculture, Gardens and Parks

No.FLORI-NGZ/48/2024-09(7727040) Dated: 03.03.2026

ANNEXURE to Notice dated 03.03.2026

S.No.	Name, Parentage & Address of the Applicant S/Shri	Name of the deceased Govt. Employee S/Shri	Designation of the deceased Employee	Department of the deceased employee	Domicile District of the applicant
1.	Sidhant Chlotra (SC) S/o Lt. Tara Chand R/o H.No. 298, Bahu Fort, Tehsil Bahu, District Jammu	Lt. Tara Chand	Helper	Directorate of Floriculture, Gardens & Parks, Jammu	Jammu
2.	Mohd. Fazil Khan S/o Lt. Khurshheed Ahmad Khan R/o Pandan Nowhatta, Tehsil Khanyar, District Srinagar	Lt. Khurshheed Ahmad Khan	Gardener	Directorate of Floriculture, Gardens & Parks, Srinagar	Srinagar
3.	Faizan Fayaz S/o Lt. Fayaz Ahmad Wani R/o Old Barzulla, Tehsil Srinagar District Srinagar	Lt. Fayaz Ahmad Wani	Gardener		Srinagar
4.	Tanveer Ahmad Dar S/o Lt. Gh. Mohd. Dar, R/o Mohd. Sozeith Goripora, Tehsil Narbal, District Budgam	Lt. Gh. Mohd. Dar	Gardener		Budgam

DIPK-11553/25
 dated: 04-03-2026

(Vivek Mohan) J&KAS
 Additional Secretary to the Government,
 Department of Floriculture, Gardens and Parks

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed to the General public that i Sehran Shafi Parray D/O. Mohammad Shafi Parray R/O:- Ujaroo applying for the issuance of Date of Birth Certificate (DOB) My DOB is 26-07-2007. As per J&K BOSE record bearing Reg No. 2108010000430017 and Chokidar record . If anybody having any objection in this regard may file the same in the office of the (BDO) Block Development Office Langate Distt Kupwara within a period of seven days from the publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained after expiry of stipulated period.

Sehran Shafi Parray
 D/O. Mohammad Shafi Parray
 R/O: Ujaroo Tehsil . Langate .
 Distt :Kupwara . fko

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir,
Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Kralpora
 E tendering NIT No 75/RnB/Kralpora of 2025-26 Dated: 04-03-2026

For & on behalf of the Lt. Governor Jammu & Kashmir (UT), e-tenders are being invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with the J&K UT Government, CPWD, Railways, and other State/Central Governments for the following works

S.No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	Earnest Money Deposit (In Rupees)	Time of completion	Date and time of opening	Class of Contractor	Major Head
1.	Construction of Computer Room, Library Room and Science Room at Govt Secondary School Budnambal 01010300704	59.78	1600/-	119570	90 days	14-03-2026 (12:00 Noon)	Aay	Samagra Shiksha 2025-26
2.	Construction of Computer Room, Library Room and Science Room at Girls High School Kralpora 01010301801	59.94	1600/-	119880	90 days		Aay	
3.	Construction of Biology Room, Chemistry Room, Computer room, Library Room and Physics Room at Higher Secondary School Kukroosa 01011501001	96.85	1600/-	193700	120 days		Aay	

Position of AAA/TS : Accorded
 Position of funds:- Available
 No: Div-KRLP/4968-82
 Date: 04-03-2026

- The bidding documents, which would include qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications/drawings, a bill of quantities (B.O.Q), a set of contract terms and conditions, and other details, can be viewed/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in on the dates tabulated below:

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	04.03.2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	04.03.2026 (1:00 PM) to 13.03.2026 (6:00PM)
3	Bid submission Start Date	04.03.2026 (1:00 PM)
4	Bid Submission End Date	13.03.2026 (6:00PM)
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	14.03.2026 (12:00 Noon) In the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Kralpora.

- Upload/Display the bank account number which is linked with the GSTIN along with proof. No payments shall be released by the department to any other bank account except the one linked with the GST registered number of the successful bidder.
- Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender Document in the shape of Treasury Challan (dated between the bid start date and the Bid Submission End date) deposited in M.H. 0059 in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Kralpora. (Tender Inviting authority). Treasury Challan must be written boldly and clearly with Name of Work, Name of the Contractor along with Contact No, NIT No and Serial No. Work on NIT (if any).
- At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload earnest money/bid security equal to 2% of the Advertised Cost in the form of CDR/FDR pledged to the tender receiving authority, i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Kralpora. Besides that, the successful bidder will have to provide Performance Security @ 5% of the allotted cost in the form of CDR/FDR/BG at the time of contract award, strictly in accordance with the Government's circular instructions from time to time. The earnest money/bid security of 2% will be released to the successful bidder only after the submission of a Performance Security of 5% of the allotted cost, which will be released after successful completion of the DLP/Maintenance Period.
- In case of abnormally low bid price the Circular instructions issued by the Finance Department vide No FD-Code/441/2021-02-158 dated 08-08-2025 regarding seeking of additional performance security from the selected bidder for quoting ALB are as:
 - Where the bid price is below 10% but not below 20% of the project cost put to bid, the additional performance guarantee percentage shall be increased by 0.1% for every percentage of bid price below 10% of the project cost put to bid starting at 1% with the additional bid performance guarantee being 0.1% and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on bid price.
 - Where the bid price is below 20% or more below of the project cost put to bid, the additional performance guarantee percentage shall be increased by 0.2% for every percentage of bid price below 20% of the project cost put to bid in addition to 1% of the bid price and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on bid price.
 - The additional performance guarantee percentage shall be rounded off to the next lower percentage based on whether the decimal point of the percentage of the bid price is below 0.5% or next higher percentage based on whether the decimal point of the percentage of the bid price is 0.5% or more.
 - The additional performance security shall be treated as part of the performance security and shall be released after successful completion of DLP.
- a. The bidders shall ensure that their bids shall be accepted only if their registrations cards are uploaded on <https://jkwidms.jk.gov.in> portal in Active Tab as per circular instructions issued by Development Commissioner works vide No.PW/DCW/DB/668-72 DT 10-06-2022.
 b. The GST-3B for last Quarter (Quarterly return) and Previous month for (Monthly return) Should be uploaded, irrespective of date of Tender.
 c. 1st lowest bidder will submit the CDR/FDR/BG within two days after opening of Tender failing which 2nd lowest will be approached. Besides 1st lowest will be debarred from participating in tendering process for one year in this division.
 d. Manual offers delivered by post/fax or in person, or offers sent by e-mail or telex shall not be accepted against electronic tenders, even if such offers are received in time. All such offers shall be considered as invalid offers and shall be rejected summarily, without any consideration.
 e. In case the L-1 fails deposit the requisite document, the action against the L-1 as per PWD rules leading to blacklisting of contractor shall be initiated.
 f. On Opening of financial bid the L1 has to produce the Original CDR/FDR pledge to the opening Authority before allotting the work along with Cost of tender document in the shape of Treasury Challan.
 g. Upload Valid Registration CARD /Renewal, PAN Card, GST Certificate and latest GST clearance ending previous Month.
 h. It is mandatory for all bidders participating to submit all documents in form of soft copies in E-tendering website and no documents in terms of Hard Copies shall be entertained. However, lowest bidder will be called for submission of CDR/FDR as well as Treasury Challan and CDR/FDR of the other participating tenderers/ bidders will be released only after surrender of Treasury Challan after the AOC is completed or bid validity period, whichever is earlier as per the GFR Rules.
 i. Furnishing of Hard Copies of bids immediately after submission of e-tenders is dispensed with. The same should be obtained only from (L-1) after opening of financial bids.
 j. The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.
 k. The bidders are advised to get the genuineness of their enlistment cards from the issuing authorities. This is mandatory and bids are liable to be rejected in absence of the Genuineness of enlistment card.
 l. The contractor may purchase required material of quality and specifications prescribed, to be certified by Engineer in charge.
 m. The steel/Key construction material shall be allowed only of approved brand by the government.
 n. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 90 days from the date of opening of technical Bids.
 o. After the Technical Evaluation of the bids, the bidders are required to submit their objections if any within 2 days, after that no claim/representation shall be entertained and it shall be deemed that there are no objections with regard to the Evaluation of the bids.
 5. The tenders are directed to submit their tender online. In case the last date of opening of Tenders happens to be a holiday/hartal the same shall be operation on the next working day.
 6. **E-Tendering Terms & Conditions**
 1. The tender receiving authority shall ensure the recovery of tender document fee from all bidders who have uploaded the tender in electronic format within fifteen days from the receipt of tender and failure of submission of tender document fee by the bidder using the site shall entail him for blacklisting.
 2. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of treasury receipt in favour of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Kralpora.
 3. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Kralpora.
 4. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 90 days from the date of opening of bids.
 5. The earnest money shall be forfeited, if-
 a) Any bidder/ tenderer withdraws his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
 b) Failure of Successful bidder is if he/she fails within the specified time limit to furnish the required performance security and contractor fails to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.

DIPK-11574/25
 dated: 04-03-2026

Sd/-
 Executive Engineer
 R&B Division Kralpora

Police Issues Advisory on Protecting Private Photos, Videos Online

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Police has issued a public advisory urging citizens to take preventive steps if someone threatens to share their private photos or videos online.

In a post shared on X, police advised individuals to create a digital hash of their private images or videos. The digital fingerprint, once generated, can be shared with participating social media platforms, enabling them to detect matching content if it is uploaded.

According to the advisory, platforms can automatically block or remove content once a match is identified, thereby preventing further circulation of intimate material.

The awareness message highlights the use of StopNCII.org, a platform that allows users to generate a digital fingerprint without uploading their actual photos or

Police advised individuals to create a digital hash of their private images or videos. The digital fingerprint, once generated, can be shared with participating social media platforms, enabling them to detect matching content if it is uploaded.

videos. The hash is then used by social media companies to identify and act against non-consensual intimate image sharing.

The advisory is part of a broader cyber safety initiative supported by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre.

According to KNT, Police have urged citizens to remain vigilant online and use available tools to safeguard their privacy.



Vehicles ply on M. A Road as movement eased in parts Srinagar on Wednesday. KO Photo Abid Bhat.

SKUAST-K Hosts Bengaluru Biotech Leaders to Strengthen Industry-Academia Ties

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) hosted a high-level strategic meeting today to strengthen collaboration between academic research and industrial innovation.

Chaired by Vice Chancellor, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, the session brought together prominent biotechnology and nutraceutical entrepreneurs from Bengaluru, Karnataka, to explore interdisciplinary partnership opportunities. The meeting focused on bridging the gap between laboratory-scale research and commercial technology transfer, specifically targeting sectors like sericulture, biotechnology, and functional food development.

The industry delegation including, Dr. Srinivas, CEO, Aspartika Biotech Pvt Ltd; Dr. Mousumi Mondal, Director, Mallipatra Nutraceutical Pvt Ltd; Aswathy Das, Director, Mightkondria Innovations LLP, and representatives from Lrugu Wellness Innovation LLP.

Coordinated by Dr Aabid Khaliq Tantray of College of Tem-

perate Sericulture, Mirgund, the discussions identified several critical pathways for developing market-ready products.

The entrepreneurs briefed on their existing collaborations with

discussed the design of antibiotic-free poultry feed solutions and the creation of innovative nutraceutical formulations that leverage the unique biodiversity of the region. The meeting also emphasized



institutions like Sri Paripoorna Sanathana Ayurvedic Medical College, highlighting their experience in the scientific validation of nutraceutical and Ayurvedic formulations.

Primary focus of the deliberations was the establishment of a Common Instrumentation Facility to support advanced research in sericulture and the utilisation of its by-products. The participants also

the need for industry-oriented academic and skill-based programs, student exchange initiatives, and the strengthening of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) facilitation to protect and commercialize university-led innovations.

The Vice Chancellor commended the visiting delegation for their efforts in building reputable enterprises from the ground up.

KU Appoints Prof Aneesa Shafi as Dean College Development Council

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The University of Kashmir has appointed Professor Aneesa Shafi of the Department of Sociology as the Dean, College Development Council (CDC) for a period of three years.

According to an order issued by the University administration, Prof Shafi will assume charge of the post from March 6, 2026 (forenoon) and will hold the position for three years or until she attains the age of superannuation, whichever is earlier.

Consequent upon the appointment, Professor Khurshed Ahmad of the Department of Commerce will stand relieved of the charge of Dean,



College Development Council with effect from the afternoon of March 5, 2026 after completion of his term.

According to KNT, the order has been issued by the Deputy Registrar, Administration Teaching Section of the University.

Chairman DLSA Reviews Functioning of LADCs

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR, MARCH 04: A review meeting of the Legal Aid Defence Counsels (LADCs) was convened today at the District Court Complex Srinagar under the chairmanship of Haq Nawaz Zargar, Chairman District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) (Principal District & Sessions Judge), Srinagar in presence of Tabassum Qadir Parray, Secretary, DLSA Srinagar.

The meeting was held to evaluate the functioning, efficiency, and overall performance of the LADCs in delivering free and effective legal services to undertrial prisoners and other eligible beneficiaries, in

line with the mandate of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 and the constitutional directive under Article 39A ensuring equal access to justice.

During the proceedings, Chairman DLSA emphasized the importance of timely legal intervention, particularly in cases involving undertrial prisoners and aged persons, and directed that priority be given to the recording of evidence in cases already assigned. The counsels were reminded of their responsibility to maintain proper records and to ensure that no eligible person is deprived of effective representation before the courts.

The Chairman stressed that

access to justice is a constitutional right and urged the Legal Aid Defence Counsels to discharge their duties with dedication, professionalism, and sensitivity towards marginalized sections of society. He clarified that conviction should not be perceived as a failure of legal aid, but rather as part of the judicial process, and encouraged counsels to continue working diligently to secure fair trials and uphold the rights of the accused.

He further directed that, on a month-to-month basis, the progress of cases at both the Sessions and Magisterial levels, particularly those at the final stages where evidence has been completed and files

are posted for arguments must be specifically reviewed.

Special attention was also drawn to bail matters, with instructions to ensure prompt follow-up in cases where bail has been granted but release has not yet taken place. The Chairman reiterated that the Legal Aid Defence Counsel System must serve as a robust mechanism to guarantee that no undertrial prisoner or indigent person is left without effective representation. By strengthening this framework, the District Legal Services Authority Srinagar seeks to reinforce the principle that justice must not only be done but must be accessible to all, especially the most vulnerable.

Apni Party Pays Tributes to Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Apni Party President Altaf Bukhari on Wednesday presided over a crucial party meeting aimed at reviewing the situation arising from the US-Israel assault on Iran and the subsequent developments.

During the meeting, the leaders paid glowing tributes to Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei, who was martyred in a US-Israel airstrike.

The leaders denounced the attack on Iran and termed it a "brutal and barbaric act of aggression," strongly condemning the assault. In view of the present circumstances, Apni Party has decided to postpone all its programmes scheduled for foundation day, and women's day on

March 8. The next date for the celebration of party foundation day will be announced later.

Besides Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari, the prominent party leaders who were present in the

During the meeting, the leaders paid glowing tributes to Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei, who was martyred in a US-Israel airstrike.

meeting included General Secretary Rafi Ahmad Mir, Provincial President Kashmir Mohammad Ashraf Mir, Chief Spokesperson & State Secretary Muntazir Mohiuddin, State Youth President & Spokesperson Yawar Dilawar Mir, Provincial Vice President Kashmir Ghulam Mohammad Mir, President Womens Wing

Dilshad Shaheen, District President Kupwara Raja Manzoor, District President Srinagar Mohammad Shafi Mir, Provincial Secretary Kashmir & Constituency Incharge Chanapora Mohammad

Ashraf Dar, Provincial Secretary Kashmir Malik Aftab, District Senior Vice President Srinagar & Constituency Incharge Habba Kadal Jeelani Hamid Kumar, Dist Vice President Srinagar Aijaz Ahmad Rather, Secretary District Srinagar Peer Wajahat, Youth President District Srinagar Ishtiyaq Ahmad Khan, and others (KNS)

Civil Society Appeals for Calm, Peaceful Mourning

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Political leaders and representatives of civil society on Wednesday called for peaceful expression of grief in Jammu and Kashmir following the assassination of Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenei.

As per the details available with KNO, PDP MLA Budgam Aga Syed Muntazir Mehdi said Jammu and Kashmir is in deep grief following the killing of Ayatollah Khamenei. "The whole of Jammu and Kashmir is in shock and there is a lot of sorrow," Aga Mehdi said.

He also appealed to the public to follow the programme issued by religious leadership.

"My request to the public is that the way our religious leadership has given us the programme—people should follow that direction and not be influenced by sensational-

ism on Facebook or Twitter," he said.

Meanwhile, Kashmir Economic Alliance (KEA) Chairman, Muhammad Yasin Khan said the Chief Minister stressed the need to allow space for people to express their grief in what he described as a sensitive religious matter.

He said discussions were held on paying tribute respectfully.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also reiterated that while people have the right to express grief and anger, it must be done peacefully and within the bounds of law to prevent any loss of life or injury.

He thanked civil society members and traders for their cooperation and expressed hope that the collective appeal for calm would help maintain peace and brotherhood across Jammu and Kashmir.

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092, 2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488, 2452222, 2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

- SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
- ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
- BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
- BIJBERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

- Sgr-Jammu highway - (Open)
- Mughal Road - (Open)
- Srinagar-Leh - (Open)

HIJRI CALENDAR
15-Ramazan
1447

PRAYERS

FAJR	5: 33
ZUHR	12:43
ASR	4: 49
Magrib	6:33
ISHA	7: 59

OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR KALANTRA

Subject: Application of Parvaiz Ahmad Khan S/o Abdul Hamid Khan R/o Kohlina Tehsil Kreeeri for the issuance of RBA Certificate in favor of his sons Zubair Ahmad Khan, Meseab Ahmad Khan, Shahid Parvaiz Khan.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Regarding the subject cited above, the applicant has submitted the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of RBA Certificate. In this connection, a report of Patwari halqa has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village, Sheikhpora of Tehsil Kreeeri and has been continuously residing in the said village for the last 15 years with family strength of 6 and having annual income of Rs. 562256/- the details of the family of the applicant are as follows:

S.No	Name of the Family Member	Relationship with the Head of the Family	Age in Years	Occupation	Annual Income
1.	Parvaiz Ahmad Khan	Self	50	Labor	562256
2.	Mahmooda Begum	Wife	45	Housewife	-
3.	Shahid Parvaiz	Son	28	Student	-
4.	Zubair Ahmad	Do	25	Govt Employee	-
5.	Meseab Rano	Daughter	21	Student	-
6.	Meseab Ahmad Khan	Son	19	Do	-

Therefore, through this Public Notice objections are being sought from the public, if any person has any objection, he/she can submit their objections in the office of the undersigned within 02 days (Seven days) positively from the date the notice has been published. No objection shall be entertained after the stipulated time.

Naib Tehsildar Kreeeri

fko

DEPARTMENT OF URBAN LOCAL BODIES KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE LANGATE NOTIFICATION

Subject:- Selection List of Self Help Group Members to be engaged as Community Mobilizers in Municipal Committee Langate.

Reference:- Advertisement Dated 26-12-2025 of Mission Director SBM (U) -2.0 of J&K Letter No. MD/SBM/U/25-26/2177-79 dated 06-02-2026 of Mission Director SBM (U) 2.0 J&K.

It is hereby notified for the information of all concerned candidates that select list of self Help Group Members to be engaged as community Mobilizers in Municipal Committee Langate has been declared and is attached at Annexure "A"

The President / Secretary/Treasurer of the concerned Self Help Group are hereby informed to sign contract Agreement with Municipal Committee Langate as per the selection procedure of the TOR regarding engagement of its selected members as Community Mobilizers.

The self-attested copies of all requisite personal, educational and experience related documents for verification along with SHG registration certificate and passbook / cancelled cheque/ Account Statement of the Self Help Group and Non Judicial stamp paper of Rs.100/- (in name of the Self Help Group as second party) shall be submitted in the Office of Executive Officer Municipal Committee Langate, by the Self Help Group for signing the contract agreement by or before 7th of March 2026.

The Self Help Group who have signed the contract agreement shall direct their respective members to join in the Office of Executive Officer Municipal Committee Langate w.e.f. 9th of March 2026.

DIPK-NB-3491/25 dated: 04-03-2026

Executive Officer Municipal Committee Langate.

No:- MC/Lang/2025-26/1743-46

Government Of Jammu and Kashmir
Housing And Urban Development Department
OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE LANGATE

S. No	S.No as per Short List	Full Name	Father's/Spouse Name	SHG Name
Selection List of SHG Members to be engaged as Community Mobilizers in MC Langate				
1	2663	Misba	Barkat Ali Dar	LALDAD
2	2625	Jozia Akhter	Mohammad Akbar Ahangar	Fatima 2
Waiting List of SHG Members to be engaged as Community Mobilizers in MC Langate				
1	2667	Saima Bano	HABIB U ULLAH MIR	MOHSIN SHG
2	2644	Asmat Mohi Ud Din	GULAM MOHI UD DIN DAR	MAKKAH SHG
3	2619	Taseena Akhter	MATEEN ABDULLAH KIRMANI	KANWAL
4	2626	Nusrat Ara Bano	Imtiyaz Ahmad Shiekh	Women on Mission
5	2662	Masrat Shafi	Peerzada mohd shafii	Babar shg
6	2645	Tabasum Akbar	MOHD AKBAR LONE	DILSHAAN SHG

Note: The priority of the waiting list candidates shall be determined strictly in the order of their serial numbers, i.e., Serial No.1 shall be given priority, followed by Serial No. 2, and so on.

(Signature)
Executive Officer
Municipal Committee Langate

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

Printed & Published by Sajjad Haider on behalf of Kashmir Observer LLP
Printed at: K.T Press Pvt. Ltd 120-Electronic Complex, Industrial Estate, Rangreth-Budgam
Published from: 5-Boulevard Srinagar J&K
Editor-in-Chief: Sajjad Haider
Managing Editor: Bilal Handoo
News Editor: Farzana Nisar
Online Editor: Syed Hamid
Head Layout & Design: Muntazir Yaseen,
Digital Media Head: Amir Ali Shah
Distribution & Advertising: Firdous Ahmad
RNI Registration No: 69503/98
Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16
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The Illusion of a Quick Victory

What seemed like a decisive blow against Tehran has evolved into regional escalation, hardened factions, and rising economic costs across the Middle East.



Dr. Manoj Kumar Mishra



Iran is a more powerful and larger country than Venezuela where the Trump administration had previously carried out operations. Its military assets are spread over a large area. Hence, it was likely that American calculation about Iran's power and the levels of destruction the protracted war will have on civilian lives and infrastructure might go wrong.

The premeditated attacks by US and Israel were initially successful with the former's military build-up in the region backing the latter's stealth intelligence operations. The CCTV cameras that Iran used for surveillance purposes and to regulate traffic were hacked by Mossad- Intelligence Agency of Israel for conducting precision attacks.

Israel and the US could leverage the Iranian deep factions for gathering intelligence in the last couple of months.

But, the strategy collapsed as the war progressed. While the US and Israel might have liked to believe that Khamenei's death would create a leadership vacuum and the military operations would end soon, the void was filled in immediately by next generation leaders defying the calculations and Mojtaba Khamenei, son of Ali Khamenei has been elected and declared the supreme leader.

Similarly, the leader's removal did not trigger an internal takeover of the regime, as happened in Bangladesh or Nepal. Instead, the Iranian establishment, made up of hardline clerics, senior military commanders, and a vast security and intelligence network, closed ranks and turned its full attention to survival. Rather than collapsing from within, it reorganized and prepared for a prolonged struggle.

This response also highlights a larger flaw in Washington's approach. The pattern of military operations pursued under Donald Trump often overlooks how such actions reshape the internal politics of the targeted country, in this case Iran. It pays little attention to how external pressure can strengthen hardliners, deepen regional tensions, and send ripples across the global order.

Two images define this moment in Iran. One shows celebration at the fall of a theocratic strongman. The other shows the regime's core, security chiefs, clerics, and even uneasy moderates, rallying in defiance of foreign attack.

Donald Trump backed protesters in words, but provided no clear vision of what follows. Regimes fall in many ways, and the aftermath rarely follows a script. A military ramrod, a hardened theocracy, or a weak democratic bid all remain possible. That outcome will turn on Iran's internal balance of power, not American intent.

War weakens rulers, but it can also fuse elites and stir nationalism. Iran's future will be mostly determined by the struggle now unfolding within.

That internal struggle is already colliding with a widening war.

Strikes by the United States and Israel killed civilians and set off a relentless cycle of attack and retaliation, placing ordinary lives and critical infrastructure at grave risk with little visible accountability.

The escalation was never going to remain confined to Iran alone. It has spilled across the region, drawing in American bases, embassies, and energy assets.

Iranian responses have targeted military facilities in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Civilian sites, including airports and hotels, have also come under fire, aimed majorly at psychological shock.

The message is clear: this conflict now threatens the stability and image of the entire Gulf.

Clearly, Iran is a more powerful and larger country than Venezuela where the Trump administration had previously carried out operations. Its military assets are spread over a large area. Hence, it was likely that American calculation about Iran's power and the levels of destruction the protracted war will have on civilian lives and infrastructure might go wrong.

With each strike from Iran on American military facilities in the Middle East, the US pronounces the war would continue until it avenges on the regime which could spell disastrous consequences for civilian lives and institutions.

The Middle East turmoil has already led to deaths of many Iranians which is estimated to be more than 700, cancellation of flights, disruption of energy supplies and decimation of buildings and civilian facilities and casualties in other countries of the Middle East.

More significantly, Iran has closed the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow sea-route with a width of 33 kilometers that connects the European and Asian shores through which around 25 percent of crude oil traverses.

This will skyrocket the prices of oil and the ordinary people will bear the brunt of the US's unaccountable military operations.

The immigrants in the region remained stranded with expectations from their host and home countries to extend them all-out assistance for safety and rescue.

The United States has lost far fewer lives so far, but even that number holds weight. It is enough to put pressure on Trump to step up the campaign.

He has always shown very little tolerance for American casualties, and openly criticized earlier presidents for putting soldiers in harm's way and later pulled back troops from Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Teflon Don likely expected this operation to be quick and decisive, something like what he believed happened in Venezuela.

That expectation has not matched reality.

The author is a Senior Lecturer in Political Science at SVM Autonomous College in Jagatsinghpur, Odisha. He can be reached at manojhyderabad@gmail.com.

KO VIEW

Mohalla Against Menace

Pandach, a neighbourhood in Srinagar, taught Kashmir something important this week.

Residents stepped out of their homes and confronted open drug and liquor use in their area. They spoke up and demanded action.

Their move showed that everyone shares responsibility for fixing this problem.

Addiction has spread deep into Kashmir's social fabric. A major survey by the Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences in Srinagar and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment found that over six lakh people in Jammu and Kashmir use drugs in some form.

Opioids top the list of concerning substances. Treatment centers in the region see more and more young patients seeking help. Police often announce drug seizures and arrests.

These steps show the state is trying, but the numbers still paint a worrying picture.

Pandach residents understood something simple. Drugs enter a community street by street. People use them in local parks, empty plots, and roadside corners. Dealers count on silence and indifference.

But when neighbours watch, speak up, and alert authorities, they shut down the space that lets this trade grow.

Substance dependence clouds judgment and weakens self control. Society gains little from moral lectures aimed at people trapped in chemical dependence. Real change happens when communities disrupt supply chains and push institutions to act quickly.

Pandach residents treated addiction as a public threat rather than a private failing.

Community watchfulness strengthens law enforcement. Police can curb drugs and file cases, but they cannot stand on every street corner. A neighbourhood that stays alert becomes the first barrier against narcotics.

Early reporting stops small groups of users from turning into organized hubs. It also sends a message to potential users that public spaces will not tolerate such behaviour.

A culture of looking away has let this crisis grow. Some people stick their heads in the sand, hoping the problem stays in someone else's home.

But addiction knows no boundaries and spares no social class. It tears families apart, drains money, and pushes young people toward crime and despair.

The Srinagar locality showed that civic courage can turn things around.

When citizens guard their own surroundings, violators find fewer places to hide. Such local action also pushes institutions to respond faster and smarter.

Kashmir often talks about protecting its next generation. Protection starts when neighbourhoods refuse to stay silent and choose to fight for their own streets.

CASH COURSE

Read This Before You Buy Anything

Oil Fears Surge

When war clouds gather, crude prices climb and everyone feels the heat.

Irshad Mushtaq

War pushes crude oil prices higher, and the reason sits in clear sight. Oil flows through regions that often stand at the center of conflict. Fighting in the Middle East shakes confidence in key oil producers. Traders picture damaged pipelines and burning oilfields. That image alone sends prices upward.

Markets move on expectation as much as events. A single missile strike can spark concern about supply. Even talk of escalation can lift crude benchmarks within hours. Buyers rush to secure future deliveries. Sellers demand a premium to part with cargo. Fear enters the price long before any real shortage appears.

The Strait of Hormuz further fuels tensions. A large share of the world's oil moves through this narrow waterway. Tankers pass through it every day to reach Asia, Europe, and beyond. War places this route under threat. Shipping companies raise charges when danger grows. Traders add what they call a risk premium to every barrel. That premium reflects the chance that ships face delays or blockades.

Higher crude prices ripple through daily life. Petrol and diesel become more expensive. Transport costs rise for food, goods, and services. Families feel the pinch at the pump and in the market. Oil-importing countries such as India face inflation and pressure on their external accounts. Governments juggle budgets as energy bills climb.

Investors also face a clear lesson. Energy risk belongs in every serious portfolio plan. Asset allocation should reflect global tensions and supply realities. Smart investors plan for volatility instead of reacting with panic.

War changes the oil equation quickly. Prices respond fast. Households, governments, and investors all share the impact when crude begins to climb.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial educator.

The US led by President Donald Trump with active backing from Israel developed an operational strategy based on robust prior intelligence gathering and pooling of resources to conduct swift and surprise attacks to assassinate the supreme leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and many of his family members.

The strategy mirrored the American precise and surprise military strikes used to depose the leader of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro.

The move may have been successful in removing the leaders but lack of accountability, calibrated vagueness and deception underlying this strategy brews more instabilities and uncertainties without corresponding answerability.

Breaking with the accountability that the US fixed for itself in case of American military operations against the Taliban regime of Afghanistan in 2001 and against the Saddam Hussain regime of Iraq in 2003, the Trump administration did not seek authorization of the Congress nor did he encourage national debate to derive support of citizens for the Iranian military operation.

Rather, he preferred to address the nation after the surprise strikes were carried out. The US did not alert the Iranian regime before launching of the attacks and nor did he precisely state the demands to be fulfilled by the regime.

Following the June 2025 American military strikes against the Iranian nuclear facilities, the US President Trump has proclaimed that Iran's nuclear capabilities were sufficiently degraded. Then, vagueness emerged what constituted the imminence of Iranian threat this time.

President Trump indicated his preference for regime change and support for the Iranian protesters. He also mentioned the objective was to destroy the military capabilities of Iran by destroying its ballistic missile programme. He referred to Iran still posing a nuclear threat, and defined Tehran as a state-sponsor of terrorism and considered its "menacing activities directly endanger the United States, our troops, our bases overseas and our allies throughout the world".

Whatever reasons the Trump administration provides to justify preemptive strikes by US and Israel, the strikes lacked the minimum level of accountability and clearly failed to reckon with the consequences.

In previous cases of Afghanistan and Iraq, the military operations were launched as the last measure only when other options such as political, economic and diplomatic pressures were exhausted. More significantly, the US took up the long-term mantle of reconstruction and nation-building once the regimes were removed.

However, the Trump administration breaks with the traditional approach to military intervention in case of Iran. It neither defined the objectives clearly nor did it exhaust other means (nuclear negotiations were conducted in a half-hearted manner) to secure them in case of Iran.

It is apparent that the US deliberately resorted to ill-defined and shifting objectives accompanied by surprise strikes to bypass accountability. By keeping the objectives vague, the administration believed it could withdraw from the war anytime showing to its citizens and international community that its operations have been successful if any of the nebulously stated objectives was realized.

President Trump clearly lacks the appetite for reconstruction and nation-building projects outside. He would like to hand over the Iranian mess to the Iranian people. He would like to keep the operations limited to airstrikes, missiles and bombers and hesitate to commit ground troops so that the American casualties would remain very low.

Letter to Editor

The Crescent Effect on Kashmir Economy

Ramzan in Kashmir changes the way money flows through the valley. Faith sets the mood, and spending follows. Families who usually count every rupee loosen their budgets during these thirty days. Kitchens grow lively, shopping lists get longer, and markets fill with people and purpose. Spending patterns shift completely during this month. Families buy more meat, fruit, dairy, baked goods, spices, cooking oil, and packaged foods. Take mutton as an example. Market estimates for 2025 show Kashmir consumed over 250 crore worth of mutton in just one Ramzan. Nearly 1,400 truckloads of sheep entered the valley. Fruit sales hit a record 167 crore. Wholesale markets turn into busy economic centers. Traders,

loaders, and transporters work around the clock.

This energy spreads far beyond food. Tailors and clothing sellers start preparing weeks early for Eid shopping. Many earn most of their yearly income during this single month. Butchers, fruit dealers, bakeries, poultry sellers, and small restaurants all depend on Ramzan to balance their yearly budgets. Vegetable farmers plan their harvests around this demand. Poultry farmers raise extra birds expecting higher sales. Wholesalers stock up on essentials long before the moon signals the start.

The religious calendar drives the business calendar, and spiritual anticipation fuels economic planning.

Something else powerful runs along-

side all this buying. Zakat, the yearly giving of 2.5 percent of savings, flows through neighbourhoods during Ramzan. Voluntary charity joins this stream.

This money travels through local channels. Mosque committees, respected elders, and direct personal giving ensure help reaches widows, orphans, and struggling families. People know who needs support in their communities. That knowledge guides where the money goes.

These gifts create real relief. Zakat pays off small debts, covers school costs, funds weddings, and buys steady food supplies. Wealth moves down through the community instead of staying at the top. This circulation builds stronger social ties and reduces obvious inequality.

Economic life feels more welcom-

ing when resources move with clear moral purpose.

Kashmir's Ramzan economy proves that a community can unite worship and business. Markets expand, small businesses thrive, and charity moves through trusted networks.

The result feels connected and meaningful. Fasting builds discipline during daylight hours. Spending injects vitality into the evenings.

Ramzan in Kashmir provides a living example of faith fueling an economy while strengthening the social bonds that sustain it.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ishfaq Jamal
drishfaqjamil@gmail.com

The Myth of Peer Waer

Kashmir calls itself the land of saints. A single exchange in a university office forced me to confront the caste, class and ego that thrive beneath that claim.



Mohammad Ilyas Bhat

I was in a university office in Kashmir that day, expecting nothing more than an ordinary interaction.

The room felt like any other office. Files were stacked high on the desk. Tea cups sat there, long forgotten and cold.

Then a senior scientist leaned back in his chair, looked straight at the registrar across the table, and asked a question that changed the mood in an instant: "What was your father's routine job?"

The question sounded polite, but the intent felt sharp.

I sensed what was happening. This was social measurement, a coded way of asking about class, rank, lineage and worth.

The scientist held a position technically junior to the registrar, and the question tried to reclaim hierarchy through ancestry.

The registrar answered in a calm voice: "My father was a labourer. He worked the whole week for twenty rupees. Out of those twenty, he spent half on his family and half he used to give to your father."

The scientist froze, and the room fell silent.

The registrar continued, "Because your father was the caretaker of a dargah, a shrine."

That reply cut through the air. A labourer earning twenty rupees a week fed his family and supported another man. The beneficiary of that support happened to be the father of the person now trying to assert superiority.

The exchange lasted seconds, but its meaning has followed me ever since.

We love to call Kashmir Peer Waer, the land of saints. We describe it as a valley of spirituality, a cradle of Sufi culture, a soil blessed with shrines and devotion.



OUR LANGUAGE ALSO REVEALS PREJUDICE WITH BRUTAL CLARITY. SWEEPERS ENDURE SLURS SUCH AS "WATUL." "Sheikh" sometimes becomes a taunt rather than a title of respect. Labourers hear themselves described as if birth fixes their place forever. A person who cleans filth performs essential work that keeps society healthy. The stain lies in the mind that insults him.

The phrase flows easily in speeches and gatherings. We repeat it until it sounds like proof of moral height.

That office encounter forced me to ask a harder question: What does a land of saints mean when its people rank each other by birth, surname, address and profession?

The registrar's story stayed with me because I see that pattern all around us.

The labourer builds our houses, the sweeper cleans our streets, the farmer grows our food, the carpenter makes our doors, the mason lifts our walls brick by brick, the driver drops our children at school every morning, and the cook prepares the meals that fill our tables.

Our lives run on their effort.

Still, many people speak about them as if they stand lower on some invisible ladder. We depend on their work every single day, and still we sit in judgement over their worth.

I often hear people mock villagers for their accent. I hear jokes about their clothes and their simple way of life in town means refinement, while village life means backwardness. Say it out loud and it sounds hollow.

Villages grow the rice we eat. They cultivate the apples we export with pride. They grow vegetables, milk cows, and harvest wheat. They

keep cities alive every single day. A tree rises high only because its roots stay strong in the soil.

House size has become another way to measure status.

A big gate earns respect, marble floors get compliments, a drawing room stacked with imported curtains and designer furniture draws admiration, and a house with ten washrooms for just four people suddenly signals wealth.

Visitors notice the tiles and chandeliers, but hardly anyone asks whether kindness, generosity, or fairness live inside those walls.

We have started worshipping cement and marble as if they confer honour.

Caste thinking threads through daily life. Many people avoid open admission of it. The signs appear in marriage talks, in social invitations, and in whispered comments about surnames.

Some castes receive automatic respect, others face silent rejection. A surname can open doors or close them before a word is spoken.

This poison thrives even among those who claim to follow Islam.

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, delivered his final sermon that shook tribal hierarchies. He declared that no Arab stands above a non Arab, no white above a black, no race above another except through taqwa, piety, righteousness and moral excellence.

The prophetic message attacked racial and tribal pride at its core. Our social behaviour often rebuilds the same walls.

Our language also reveals prejudice with brutal clarity.

Sweepers endure slurs such as "Watul." "Sheikh" sometimes becomes a taunt rather than a title of respect. Labourers hear themselves described as if birth fixes their place forever.

A person who cleans filth performs essential work that keeps society healthy. The stain lies in the mind that insults him.

Vanity has grown so deep that even spelling turns into a badge. A Soofi with two o's receives different treatment than a Sofi with one o. Alphabets have become tools of ego. Such thinking shrinks faith into a costume.

We visit shrines and praise saints, speak of blessings and divine grace, and bow in prayer. But pride rises in our daily conduct, and ego surfaces in our small exchanges.

We kiss the threshold of shrines and step over the self respect of those who serve us. We recite the Quran and speak harshly to the hands that feed our children.

Saints, if they walked among us, would ask simple questions. How do you treat the poor? How do you speak to labourers? Why do you divide society into high and low?

Those questions strike closer to the heart of faith than any ritual.

That afternoon in the university office returns to me whenever I hear someone boast about lineage or property.

The registrar exposed how weak social pride can be. Status often

PEER WAER HAS TO LIVE IN ACTIONS RATHER THAN IN ADAGES. I still see that office and hear that exchange. It showed me a simple truth: a man's worth comes from his character, rather than his surname, house, or city. True Peer Waer is proven through humanity, in how we treat the people who build our lives.

rests on sacrifices made by people who never receive recognition.

A labourer earning twenty rupees a week supported a shrine caretaker and his family. Years later, his son sat in authority while someone tried to measure him by birth.

Despite this distasteful social reality, Kashmir is beautiful and full of saints, scholars, poets, and thinker. But beauty alone does not make people good.

Peer Waer has to live in actions rather than in adages.

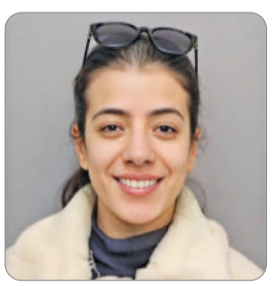
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True Peer Waer is proven through humanity, in how we treat the people who build our lives.

—The author works in agricultural seed production and is currently writing his first short story collection in Kashmir.

Kashmir's Donga Days

From weddings to Sufiana melodies, Dongas once made water the heart of valley celebrations.



Shereen Naman

In the Kashmir of the 1940s, when the rivers were still arteries of life and leisure, a journey on a Donga was a small act of joy.

These long, arched wooden boats, shaped like floating homes, once glided across the Jhelum, Dal, and Wular, carrying families, friends, and musicians through the slow-moving heart of the valley.

A Donga cruise was both travel and tradition, a festival that unfolded on water.

People would set off for days, with their neatly-packed belongings and unburdened hearts. The river was their road, and the lake their destination. Weddings, fairs, or simple outings became occasions for collective celebration.

It was common to see a flotilla of Dongas on the way to Mela Qamar Sahib in Ganderbal or toward the Hazratbal Shrine, where faith and festivity met at the lake's edge.

By the time they reached Hazratbal, the waters seemed to calm themselves. The white

dome of the Dargah shimmered in the distance, reflected in Dal's mirror-like surface.

For many, this was less a pilgrimage than a pause, a chance to think, breathe, and feel the pulse of life in the steady lap of the oar. Faith flowed with the current, and the soft recitation of prayers merged with the sound of ripples, turning each journey into a meditation.

The music was never far behind. Sufiana musicians often accompanied these voyages, their instruments tuned to the hum of the river. Among them was Ghulam Mohammed Qaleenbaff, a master of Sufiana Kalam, whose name still stirs nostalgia among the older generation.

His compositions seemed made for the water: melodies that rose and fell like waves. When his voice filled the air, the boundaries between earth and sky blurred, and the passengers sat transfixed, as if time had slowed for them alone.

Someone would always sing Rasul Mir's haunting verse, "Mati roz dama roz daryam chani lolray", a line that carried longing like perfume.

The poet's words, spoken softly over the water, reached the soul without effort. The Donga, swaying gently beneath, became a cradle for memory.

Storytellers too found a home aboard these boats. The Dastangos, keepers of oral legends, were often invited to share their craft. Their voices, rich and rhythmic, brought to life Maqbool Shah Kralwari's Gulraiz, an



epic of love and valour.

As they narrated the trials of Noshlab and Ajab Malik, the boat seemed to move in harmony with the story's flow. Children listened with open mouths, elders nodded with knowing smiles, and even the river seemed to listen.

These moments stitched generations together, each retelling an offering to the culture that thrived on song, and

shared silence.

By the 1970s and '80s, the Donga still floated in family albums and weekend plans. Schoolchildren boarded them for picnics, their laughter bouncing off the water. Families set out for long summer days on Dal Lake, the snow peaks glinting in the distance, their reflections dancing on the ripples.

The Donga was both shelter and celebration, a wooden

world where the boundaries between home and nature dissolved.

As dusk fell, the scene shifted from pastoral to regal. The nobles of Srinagar and the newly wealthy often hosted soirées on the lake, their boats illuminated with lanterns that mirrored in the water like twin stars.

Hafiz Nagma performers, graceful women whose art blended music and movement,

MY OWN FASCINATION WITH THE DONGA BEGAN IN CHILDHOOD, LISTENING TO MY GRANDMOTHER RECALL HER YOUTHFUL VOYAGES. Her eyes would light up as she described the evenings when the world seemed afloat in golden light, when music and water became indistinguishable.

would sing of love and devotion, their anklets keeping rhythm with the water's pulse. Their voices lingered in the air long after the last note, a sound that seemed stitched into the golden sky of a Kashmiri evening.

No gathering was complete without the scent of Wazwan. Copper trays were laid out, steaming with Rogan Josh, Yakhni, and Gushtaba. The aroma floated through the air, mingling with the smoke of kangris and the sweetness of ittar.

Each dish told a story of heri-

tage, recipes handed down like heirlooms, unchanged by time. The meal was less about indulgence and more about belonging, a ritual of togetherness that transformed dinner into devotion.

Those who grew up with the Donga remember its texture, the feel of worn wood beneath the fingers, the gentle sway that lulled them to sleep, and the faint sound of oars slicing through moonlit water. To them, it was not a relic but a living companion, one that held laughter, prayers, and songs within its frame.

By the turn of the century, the Donga had mostly vanished from daily life. Motorboats and speed launches replaced its rhythm, and the old storytellers fell silent. But the memory of those floating gatherings endures, carried in the stories told by elders, in the faded photographs, in the verses of poets who once sang to the river.

My own fascination with the Donga began in childhood, listening to my grandmother recall her youthful voyages. Her eyes would light up as she described the evenings when the world seemed afloat in golden light, when music and water became indistinguishable.

Through her stories, I came to understand that the Donga was a symbol of a people who believed that life, like water, was best lived in flow.

—The author is a cultural activist by passion and scribe by profession.

Severe Irritability In Teens Can Be Reduced By Daily Doses Of Vitamins & Minerals: Research

Press Trust Of India

New Zealand: Irritability is one of the most common and distressing problems teenagers and their families face.

Its main symptom is an excessive reaction to negative emotional stimuli, resulting in temper outbursts and severe irritable mood.

While current treatment options such as psychotherapy and medications are helpful for some, they can be inaccessible or poorly tolerated.

The new research, based on a double-blinded, placebo-controlled clinical trial, shows broad-spectrum micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) can significantly reduce severe irritability in teenagers. Teens with severely disruptive behaviour experienced especially large improvements.

This offers a safe, scalable and biologically grounded alternative to conventional psychiatric treatments.

Urgent need for more effective treatments

Irritability cuts across many psychiatric presentations, including anxiety, depression, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and other disruptive behaviour disorders.

The need for interventions that directly target irritability, have fewer side effects and are available to all communities is urgent.

Statistics on mental health in young people are especially concerning. Youth mental health has been declining globally over the past two decades and has now reached a "dangerous phase", according to a Lancet commission.

Despite this, research consistently highlights a lack of



effective and accessible treatments for severely irritable youth. This suggests a significant unmet public health need.

The research findings are based on the Balancing Emotions of Adolescents with Micronutrients (BEAM) trial, in which 132 unmedicated teenagers (aged 12 to 17) with moderate to severe irritability were randomly assigned to micronutrients (taken as four pills three times a day) or an active placebo for eight weeks. They were monitored monthly online by a clinical psychologist.

The placebo response was high, suggesting that simply participating in the study helped many teens feel able to

improve their behaviour. But micronutrients still outperformed the placebo across key clinical measures such as irritability, emotional reactivity and overall improvement.

We saw the strongest effects in teenagers with disruptive mood dysregulation disorder (DMDD), with 64% responding to micronutrients compared to 12.5% on placebo. This demonstrates an unusually large effect for a psychiatric intervention.

Parents of participants receiving micronutrients rated the teens' conduct and prosocial behaviour much higher compared with those of teens on placebo.

Micronutrient treatment was

also associated with more rapid improvements in clinician-rated irritability, parent-reported dysphoria and teen-reported quality of life, stress and prosocial behaviours.

One of the most notable and reassuring findings was that suicidal ideation, which about a quarter of study participants reported at the start of the trial, improved over time for both groups, but with a greater change for teens on micronutrients. Self-harm behaviour also decreased for both groups.

Only one side effect differed significantly between groups: diarrhoea was more common on micronutrients (20.9%) than placebo (6.2%). But this side

effect was typically temporary and resolved by taking the nutrients with food and water.

A minority (fewer than 10%) found swallowing pills a challenge. Other side effects reported equally in both groups included occasional headaches, stomach aches or a dry mouth. These tended to dissipate within the first few weeks.

Socioeconomic background matters

The response to treatment was moderated by the teens' socioeconomic status.

Participants from lower socioeconomic backgrounds were more likely to benefit from micronutrients. This is particularly meaningful for both clinical practice and public health.

Lower socioeconomic status is typically associated with greater exposure to nutritional insufficiencies, chronic stress, reduced access to health services and higher rates of mental health difficulties.

The findings suggest micronutrients may help address underlying nutritional vulnerabilities that may be more prevalent or more severe in disadvantaged groups.

This pattern also indicates that micronutrient supplementation, if publicly funded, could function as a low-cost, scalable intervention, with the potential to reduce health inequities.

Many evidence-based psychosocial or pharmacological treatments require resources – time, transportation, specialist access – that disproportionately disadvantage lower-income families.

In the trial, all meetings between the psychologist and the teen with their family were conducted online and the micronutrients were couriered

across the country, making this intervention accessible, particularly to rural communities.

Micronutrients may represent an intervention that is both accessible and responsive to the specific needs of youth who are most at risk yet often least well served by traditional care pathways.

This study was developed alongside M ori health providers and fits within a tikanga (traditional) M ori framework. It had a high percentage of M ori participants (27%) and worked closely with them, their families and health providers to assist in improving mental health outcomes.

The BEAM trial provides robust evidence that a simple nutritional approach can meaningfully improve symptoms, including emotional reactivity, conduct difficulties and even suicidal ideation.

These results are relevant for parents, clinicians, teachers and policymakers seeking safe and practical interventions, especially for young people who cannot access or do not respond well to existing treatments. The results also highlight important equity implications, as teens from lower income families showed stronger responses.

The results cast a new lens on the cause of some psychiatric problems, often conceptualised as chemical imbalances or family dysfunction. They reframe some cases of irritability as a possible nutritional and metabolic vulnerability, one that might be addressed with greater attention to the quality of our food alongside some supplementation with broad-spectrum micronutrients.

Divorce Can't Be Granted on WhatsApp Chats Without Rebuttal: HC

Press Trust Of India

Mumbai: Divorce cannot be granted on grounds of alleged cruelty merely based on WhatsApp chats without giving the spouse a chance to rebut, the Bombay High Court has said.

A bench of Justices Bharati Dandge and Manjusha Deshpande last week quashed an order passed by the Nashik district family court allowing an application filed by a man seeking divorce from his wife on grounds of cruelty.

The woman moved the HC, challenging the family court order claiming that the same was passed ex-parte and without giving her an opportunity to oppose or put forth her arguments.

The family court, in its May 2025 order, relied on a WhatsApp chat submitted by the man in which the woman demanded that they shift from Nashik to Pune to live separately, and also in which she allegedly made derogatory comments against her mother-in-law and sister-in-law.

The family court noted that the wife had used pressure tactics, emotional blackmail and intemperate language in the WhatsApp chat and held that cruelty was meted against the husband and hence he was entitled to divorce.

The high court, in its order, noted that the family court failed to give an opportunity to the wife to rebut the evidence (WhatsApp chats) submitted by the husband.

"Merely relying on the WhatsApp chat, the divorce decree cannot be granted, since it is not proved by leading evidence," the HC said.

Hence, the order granting decree of divorce needs to be set aside and the matter needs to be remanded to the family court so that the wife is granted an opportunity to be heard and submit evidence, it said.

The court said that while the family court decides the matter afresh, the estranged couple can explore the possibility of settlement through mediation.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Funeral Preparations

Khamenei's burial.

Iranian media also reported that the building housing the 88-member Assembly of Experts in the holy city of Qom was struck during US-Israeli air raids on Tuesday.

Earlier, a symbolic funeral procession for the Iranian leader was held in the Iraqi holy city of Najaf. Thousands of mourners participated as a symbolic coffin of the late leader was carried around the sacred shrine of Imam Ali, one of the most revered sites in Shia Islam.

Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Hosseini Khamenei was widely regarded as one of the most influential religious authorities of the Shia world, with followers and admirers spread across the Muslim world and beyond. His passing has triggered an outpouring of grief among supporters, with mourning ceremonies being held across the region.

Sayyed Ali Khamenei was born in Mashhad, in Iran's Khorasan region. His father's family originally hailed from the town of Khameneh in East Azerbaijan province, from which the family surname "Khamenei" is derived.

Fear, Anxiety As

shaken and traumatised.

Those relocated to Qom also reported hearing explosions shortly after their arrival, raising serious doubts about the effectiveness of internal relocation as a safety measure.

"Our children are extremely scared. Explosions near their hostels have left them mentally disturbed. They are unable to sleep or focus on their studies. We fear for their lives every moment," another parent said.

Parents and student groups said the crisis has now taken a toll on the mental health of students, with many experiencing severe stress, anxiety and panic amid continuing uncertainty. Families back home, they said, are also enduring sleepless nights.

"This is not just a security issue anymore, it has become a psychological crisis affecting both students and their families," a group of parents said.

While acknowledging earlier steps taken by authorities, including precautionary relocations, parents and student bodies have now demanded a full-scale evacuation of Indian students from Iran.

The All India Medical Students Association (AIMSA), along with parents, has urged the Ministry of External Affairs to initiate immediate evacuation measures, preferably through nearby land borders into safer countries such as Armenia or Azerbaijan.

Dr Mohammad Momin Khan, national representative and J&K president of AIMSA, expressed concern over the deteriorating situation and called for swift action to ensure the safety of Indian students.

"Partial relocation is not sufficient given the current ground situation. A structured evacuation plan must be executed without delay," he said.

Parents said many students remain scattered across different parts of Iran, including high risk areas, with limited communication and growing uncertainty. The absence of a clear evacuation plan has further intensified anxiety among families.

Officials said the situation is being closely monitored and efforts are ongoing to ensure

the safety of Indian nationals in Iran.

"With folded hands, we appeal to the Government of India to rescue our children. Every passing hour is increasing our fear," the parents said. (inputs from KNO)

Precautionary Curbs

incident," the official said, adding that authorities were closely monitoring the situation.

Another official said mobile internet services across the Valley have been restricted to 2G speed and the arrangement would remain in place till Thursday evening.

Security personnel have been deployed in strength at several locations, with barricades erected in vulnerable pockets. Additional forces have also been stationed in areas that witnessed rallies and processions over the past few days.

While authorities said the overall law and order situation remained under control, peaceful rallies and processions were reported from parts of Sopore in Baramulla district, as well as Budgam and Bandipora districts.

In Srinagar, security forces maintained a visible presence in several downtown localities and commercial hubs to deter large gatherings. Movement of vehicles remained largely normal in most areas, though some localities witnessed restrictions on public assembly.

Officials said district administrations were in touch with community leaders and were monitoring developments closely to ensure that peace is maintained.

"No major incident has been reported so far. Preventive measures are in place to ensure peace," an official said, adding that further decisions regarding relaxation of the curbs would be taken based on the ground situation.

J&K Umrah Pilgrims

respective tour coordinators and embassy helplines and to follow official updates regarding travel arrangements.

The situation remains fluid as regional tensions continue to impact international air travel across parts of the Middle East. (KNT)

ED Plea Rejected;

case had been filed by the CBI under Sections 120-B, 406 and 409 of the RPC. Subsequently, the ED moved an application seeking addition of offences—411 and 424 RPC, citing liberty granted by the High Court of J&K and Ladakh on 14 August 2024 when it quashed the chargesheet filed by ED against Farooq and the other accused persons.

The CJM noted that the investigation and prosecution in the present case are being conducted by the CBI, and the ED is neither the investigating nor the prosecuting agency in the matter.

The court reiterated the "settled legal position" that the ED can initiate action only upon the existence of a predicate offence under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.

The court further recorded that there was nothing on record to suggest that the ED had informed the CBI regarding the alleged commission of offences under RPC Sections of 411 (Dishonestly receiving stolen property) and 424 (Dishonest or fraudulent removal or concealment of property).

The Court also took note of the ED's

submission that its Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) and subsequent proceedings under the PMLA had already been quashed by the High Court wide judgment dated 14 August 2024.

Relying on the Supreme Court judgment and Madras High Court in related matters, the CJM held that the authorities under the PMLA cannot proceed on the mere assumption that a scheduled offence has been committed. The court observed that the existence of a predicate offence is the "terminus a quo" (starting point) for the ED to exercise its jurisdiction.

Drawing an analogy, the court remarked that the predicate offence is like a ship and the ED's powers under PMLA akin to a limpet mine—without the ship, the limpet cannot function. Accordingly, the application filed by the ED was dismissed by the court.

Meanwhile, on the question of charge and discharge, the court, after hearing arguments and perusing the material on record, found that the essential ingredients of offences under Sections 120-B, 406 and 409 RPC are prima facie made out against all the accused persons. It also held that offences under Section 120-B, 406 and 409 read with Section 109 RPC are prima facie attracted against accused Nos. 4 and 5—Bashir Ahmad Misger and Farooq Abdullah.

The court directed that the accused persons be charged for the said offences. It, however, clarified that addition of charges can be done suo motu at any stage before pronouncement of judgment after recording the statements of material witnesses.

The matter has been listed for next week for framing of charges. The court further ordered that after framing of charges, the statements of the approvers—accused Nos. 3 and 6 (Manzoor Gananfar Ali and Gulzar Ahmad Being)—shall be recorded as evidence, and appropriate orders shall follow if they resile from their earlier stand.

War Reaches India's

frigate IRIS Dena sank early Wednesday about 40 nautical miles south of the Sri Lankan port city of Galle after issuing a distress call around 5:30 a.m. local time, according to Sri Lankan authorities. Within hours, what began as a search-and-rescue effort evolved into a geopolitical flashpoint when US officials confirmed to Reuters that American forces had carried out the strike.

Hospital authorities in Galle said at least 87 bodies had been brought ashore by rescuers responding to the emergency call. Thirty-two sailors were rescued and taken to hospital, while around 60 others remain missing from an estimated crew of about 180 personnel aboard the vessel.

The attack occurred hundreds of miles away from the Persian Gulf battlefield, where US and Israeli forces are striking Iran and Tehran is responding with missile and drone attacks. Yet the sinking of the Dena — in waters close to Sri Lanka and near major Indian Ocean shipping lanes — highlighted how rapidly the war is spreading beyond its original theatre.

According to Sri Lankan officials, the Moudge-class frigate had been sailing home from India after participating in the International Fleet Review and the MILAN multilateral naval exercise, a major naval drill hosted by India that brings together ships

from dozens of countries.

The ship's recent presence in India has drawn particular attention to the strike. In February, India's Eastern Naval Command had publicly welcomed the Iranian vessel on its arrival at Visakhapatnam for the exercises.

"Indian Navy welcomes IRIS Dena of the Iranian Navy on her arrival at Visakhapatnam... reflecting long-standing cultural links between the two nations," the command wrote on social media on February 17, sharing photographs of the ship and its officers.

Now, barely weeks after taking part in the Indian-hosted exercise, the same vessel has been destroyed in a US attack in waters not far from India's maritime neighbourhood.

A video released by the Pentagon, purportedly showing the strike, depicts a massive explosion tearing through the rear of the ship, lifting part of the vessel from the water before it begins sinking stern-first.

Rescuers described a chaotic scene in the hours that followed.

"People were floating in the water," one Sri Lankan rescue official said as navy and coast guard teams rushed to the area.

Bodies wrapped in white sheets were brought in batches to Karapitiya Hospital in Galle, where they were transferred to the morgue.

According to Sri Lankan sources cited by Reuters, the commander of the vessel and several senior officers survived and told Sri Lankan naval officials that the ship had been hit by a submarine-launched attack.

Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath confirmed in parliament that around 180 sailors were aboard the vessel at the time of the strike.

The incident has raised troubling questions across the region about the widening footprint of the US-led military campaign against Iran and the risks it poses to countries far from the primary conflict zone.

The Dena had not been operating near the Gulf battlefield but was returning from a multinational exercise hosted by India — an event designed to promote naval cooperation and maritime stability in the Indo-Pacific.

Analysts say the attack illustrates how the conflict is rapidly eroding traditional geographic boundaries.

What began as a confrontation centred on Iran and the Gulf has now reached the Indian Ocean, one of the world's busiest maritime corridors and a region of vital importance to both India and global trade.

For India and Sri Lanka, the sinking of a ship that had recently been hosted at an Indian naval event marks an unsettling moment — a stark reminder that the war is no longer confined to distant waters but is beginning to brush against their own maritime backyard.

Day Temps 7-10°C

normal, while Kokernag registered a high of 20.6 degrees Celsius, 9.4 degrees above normal.

The ski resort of Gulmarg recorded a maximum temperature of 12.6 degrees Celsius, 9.1 degrees above normal, while the minimum settled at 2.0 degrees Celsius.

In the Jammu division, the winter capital Jammu recorded a maximum temperature of 30.3 degrees Celsius, 6.0 degrees above normal, while the minimum temperature was recorded

at 14.3 degrees Celsius.

Banihal recorded a high of 24.6 degrees Celsius, 9.8 degrees above normal, while Batote registered a maximum temperature of 25.3 degrees Celsius, 10.7 degrees above normal.

Katra recorded a maximum temperature of 29.6 degrees Celsius, which was 7.7 degrees above normal, while Baderwah recorded a high of 25.4 degrees Celsius, 9.1 degrees above normal.

The IMD said that no rainfall was recorded in most stations across the Union Territory during the past 24 hours. Relative humidity at 5:30 pm stood at 43 percent in Srinagar and 43 percent in Jammu, the department added.

Express Grief

importance of maintaining peace and communal harmony in Jammu and Kashmir. While acknowledging the grief felt by many people, he urged that expressions of mourning remain peaceful and responsible.

The gathering also held a Fatiha for Ayatollah Khamenei and others who lost their lives in the recent military strikes. Participants prayed for peace and hoped for stability in the region, the CMO said.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, the chief minister thanked civil society representatives and religious leaders for issuing a joint appeal urging people to maintain peace.

"I am thankful to all civil society and religious leaders that a common appeal was issued to the people of Jammu and Kashmir to maintain peace and brotherhood. We express our grief and anger peacefully," Omar said, expressing hope that the message would resonate with the public.

Referring to recent protests in parts of Jammu and Kashmir, Omar said civil society representatives had requested the government to adopt a "soft approach".

When asked about the registration of a case against National Conference MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi, the chief minister declined to comment on individual FIRs.

"I will not talk about individual FIRs here, but the issue of collective FIRs was discussed in the meeting and we will take it forward," he said. Ruhullah and former Srinagar mayor Junaid Azim Mattu have been booked for allegedly circulating "false, fabricated and misleading content" on social media platforms.

On the issue of Kashmiri students stranded in Iran, Omar said the government was aware of their concerns. He noted that while some students did not wish to return at the moment, others feared losing an academic year if they left.

"I think it will be a huge injustice with the students. I will take it up with the Government of India and request them to take it up with the Government of Iran via their ambassador so that those students are allowed to leave. When the situation improves, they will return and their year will not be lost," he said.

The chief minister also said that restrictions imposed in parts of the Valley would be eased as the situation improves.

"It is our endeavour that no innocent blood is spilled and no one gets injured in law and order disturbances. We want the situation to remain stable and for that, the government has received the support of the civil society," he added.

Early Bud Break in Apple Trees Worries Kashmir Orchardists

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Above normal temperatures during February and a noticeable deficit in precipitation have triggered early bud break in apple orchards across parts of Kashmir, prompting concern among orchardists about possible implications for this year's apple production.

Farmers from several apple-growing belts said the early bud activity has appeared weeks ahead of the usual schedule. They fear that premature budding could expose the crop to weather fluctuations during the crucial flowering period.

Orchardists said apple trees require sufficient chilling hours during winter to maintain dormancy and ensure proper flowering and fruit setting. Warmer conditions during the winter months have shortened



the chilling period, leading to an early break in dormancy.

"This year we observed buds appearing much earlier than expected. If temperatures drop suddenly or frost occurs, the

tender buds may get damaged which could affect the overall yield," said an orchardist from Shopian district.

Another grower from Pulwama said the lack of adequate

THIS YEAR WE OBSERVED BUDS APPEARING MUCH EARLIER THAN EXPECTED. If temperatures drop suddenly or frost occurs, the tender buds may get damaged which could affect the overall yield,"

snowfall and rainfall during winter has added to the worries of farmers. "Snowfall acts as a natural protection for orchards and helps maintain the chilling requirement of apple

trees. This winter was relatively dry and warmer which has disturbed the natural cycle," he said.

Farmers said the coming weeks will be crucial for the crop as weather stability during the flowering stage will determine the extent of any potential damage. "If the weather remains stable, the crop may recover. But sudden cold spells or frost could prove harmful for the early buds," an orchardist from Kulgam said.

According to KNT, Horticulture experts have also advised orchardists to closely monitor orchard conditions and follow proper management practices to reduce potential losses. They said the impact of early budding on the final yield will largely depend on the weather pattern during the next few weeks.

Missing Woman Traced in Reasi, Reunited With Family

SRINAGAR: District Police Reasi on Wednesday traced a missing woman and safely reunited her with her family after sustained search efforts.

Police said a missing report regarding Guddi Begum, wife of Mohammad Yousaf, was lodged at Police Post Dhansal. Soon after receiving the report, a police team was constituted and investigation was initiated to trace her whereabouts.

During the course of investigation, which involved field inquiries, technical analysis and coordination with other agencies, the woman was traced in Reasi. Acting promptly, a police team from Police Post Dhansal led by Sub Inspector Fida Hussain Lone, Incharge Police Post Dhansal, under the supervision of SHO Police Station Arnas and SDPO Arnas, reached the location and recovered her safely.

After completing necessary legal and medico-legal formalities, the woman was handed over to her legal heirs and the missing report was accordingly closed.

According to KNT, Police said it remains committed to ensuring the safety of citizens and urged the public to report such incidents promptly for timely action. (Observer News Service)

Infrastructure Projects Reviewed In Reasi

JAMMU: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary visited various areas of Reasi to review the ongoing development works.

During the tour, the Deputy Chief Minister assessed progress on key infrastructure projects aimed at strengthening connectivity and public convenience.

The Deputy CM conducted an on-the-spot inspection of the link road from Kalidhar Mandir to Samadhi Ghai Jagi. He reviewed the status of the project and directed the PWD (R&B) Division Reasi to ensure immediate completion of the road, including blacktopping (BT), at the earliest for convenience of the general public and the visiting devotees. He instructed the concerned officers and field functionaries to expedite the execution of work and ensure timely completion strictly as per approved specifications and quality standards.

The Deputy Chief Minister also paid obeisance at Kalidhar Mandir and sought divine blessings for peace and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir. He inspected the ongoing works being undertaken to ensure seamless accessibility, improved facilities and greater convenience for the devotees. He also inspected other ongoing projects and stressed on timely completion. (Observer News Service)

Delegation Calls on Forest Minister Rana

JAMMU: A delegation led by former Minister Abdul Majid Wani and Ghulam Mustafa met Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, to deliberate on key issues concerning the functioning and strengthening of the Jammu and Kashmir Forest Development Corporation Limited (J&K FDC). The delegation raised several important matters related to timber marking, scientific extraction processes, quality control mechanisms and the need for a more transparent and efficient sale system.

They underscored the importance of modernizing and streamlining the operational procedures to ensure consistent supply of high-quality timber, enhance revenue realisation and protect the legitimate interests of contractors and stakeholders associated with the Corporation.

They stressed the need to promote sustainable livelihood opportunities for forest dwellers and local villagers through value addition, community participation and environmentally responsible initiatives.

Responding to the concerns, the Minister gave a patient hearing to the issues and suggestions presented by the delegation. He assured them of time-bound redressal of their issues. He reiterated the government's commitment towards transparency, efficiency and accountability in the functioning of the Corporation. (Observer News Service)

Power Curtailment during Ramazan Irks Inhabitants of Old Anantnag

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Inhabitants of several localities in old Anantnag town have expressed resentment over prolonged power curtailment during the holy month of Ramazan, saying the situation has caused considerable inconvenience to households.

People from areas including Mattan Chowk, Daganagar Pora, Cheni Chowk, Nai Basti, Iqbal Abad, Khanabal and Gujmag said electricity supply remains disrupted for nearly six hours daily despite the ar-

eas being fully metered.

The inhabitants said they are paying regular electricity bills but continue to face an erratic supply schedule, particularly during Sehri and Iftar hours when power demand is high. They termed the situation frustrating and urged authorities to streamline the supply during the fasting month.

According to KNT, Consumers appealed to the Power Development Department to review the curtailment schedule and ensure uninterrupted electricity during critical hours of Ramadan.

India's Silence on US-Israel Attack on Iran Baffling: Mehbooba

Press Trust of India

SRINAGAR: PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday said India's silence on the US-Israel aggression against Iran was incomprehensible for her, as only Tehran had stood by New Delhi when sanctions were imposed against the latter for nuclear tests.

"I fail to understand that we are a democratic country, but neither has our country's leadership condemned it or expressed condolences with the people there (Iran), nor has the leadership here (in Jammu and Kashmir)," the former chief minister told reporters here.

She said India has had very strong relations with Iran in the past.

"Every Muslim country used to side with Pakistan on the Kashmir issue, except Iran, which took India's side. When sanctions were imposed on India, Iran was the only country that gave us oil. They did not even take the money first, and then took it later. Despite that, unfortunately, the country's leadership did not condemn it or even express condolences to the people of Iran," she said.

Mehbooba Mufti, a former chief minister of the erstwhile state of J&K, burnt the effigies of the US President Donald Trump and Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu.

"Our hearts are filled with grief, but we cannot protest outside, so at least



we burnt the effigies of these satanic forces, be it Trump or Netanyahu. We want to send a message to the world that the people of J-K, especially the people of the valley, stand with the people of Iran and salute their bravery and sacrifices," she added.

The PDP president said the world order today is in total disarray.

"There is no world order. Today, an Epstein goon like Trump can go into Iran and Venezuela along with Epstein master Netanyahu. They are war criminals, and together they go and attack a sovereign country like Iran, and nobody is talking about it," she said.

"Unfortunately, the Muslim countries in the Gulf, Middle East, are watching like mute spectators and tacitly supporting this attack on Iran by providing bases to the Americans. It is regrettable," she added.

She also hit out at Pakistan, saying it seems the country's recent pact with Saudi Arabia was not against Is-

rael but Iran.

On September 17, 2025, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan signed a Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA) in Riyadh. The pact establishes that any aggression against either nation is considered an attack on both.

"It seems all the Muslim countries have become lapdogs of the US and Israel and are directly or indirectly involved in this attack. Iran is fighting alone, and so our heart, mind and soul stand with them," Mufti said.

She called for the release of the people detained during the protests in the valley against the assassination of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei.

The PDP chief also demanded that the FIR against Srinagar Lok Sabha MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi and former city mayor Junaid Azim Mattu be withdrawn.

"I also appeal to the people here to remain peaceful," she added.

Mehbooba Mufti also said the cases registered against ruling National Conference MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi and former Mayor of Srinagar Junaid Azim Mattu were "egregiously unwarranted" and should be withdrawn immediately.

She was reacting to Jammu and Kashmir Police registering cases against Mehdi and Mattu on Tuesday for allegedly circulating "false, fabricated and misleading content" on digital and social media platforms.

Police Seize 3 Vehicles in Ganderbal for Illegal Mining



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Continuing its crackdown on illegal mining activities, Jammu and Kashmir Police on Wednesday seized three vehicles in Ganderbal district for their alleged involvement in the illegal extraction and transportation of minor minerals.

Officials said the vehicles, including two tipper trucks and one tractor, were intercepted within the jurisdiction of Police Station Safapora and Police Station Kangan. The vehicles were reportedly transporting illegally extracted material from Nallah Sindh without the mandatory permissions.

Police teams from the concerned stations, acting in coordination with the Geology and Mining Department, intercepted the vehicles during checking and seized them on the spot.

Officials said illegal extraction of minerals not only results in revenue loss to the government but also poses a serious threat to the ecological balance of the region.

According to KNT, Police have warned offenders to desist from unlawful mining and transportation of minerals, stating that strict legal action will continue against violators involved in illegal extraction or trade of minerals.

Four Tractors Seized in Shopian

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Continuing its drive against illegal mining, Jammu and Kashmir Police on Wednesday seized four tractors allegedly involved in the unauthorized extraction and transportation of minerals in Berthipora and Takwan areas of south Kashmir's Shopian district.

Officials said a police party from Police Post Berthipora intercepted two tractors during routine patrolling that were engaged in illegal mining without the required permissions. In this connection, FIR No. 09/2026 under the relevant provisions of law has been registered at Police

Station Keller and investigation has been initiated.

In a separate action, police from Police Station Keller seized two more tractors found transporting minerals illegally. Accordingly, another case, FIR No. 10/2026, has been registered at the same police station and further investigation is underway.

According to KNT, Police said the crackdown on illegal mining will continue to safeguard natural resources and prevent unlawful extraction activities in the district. The public has been urged to cooperate with authorities by reporting such activities, assuring that the identity of informants will be kept confidential.

HQ 84 Bn Central Reserve Police Force celebrates Holi

Observer News Service

RAMBAN: The vibrant festival of Holi was celebrated with great enthusiasm and community spirit today at Tac Headquarters 84 Battalion, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

The festival, which marks the arrival of spring and symbolizes the triumph of good over evil, brought together officers, personnel, family members and local residents in a spirit of unity and joy.

During the celebrations, participants exchanged greetings, played with colours and shared sweets, strengthening bonds of friendship and harmony. The event reflected the sense of camaraderie and togetherness that defines the force and its extended family.

Speaking on the occasion, Commandant 84 Bn, N. Ranbir Singh, highlighted that CRPF personnel, hailing from different parts of the country, often remain stationed in far-flung and conflict-prone regions in the line of duty. He stated that such celebrations are organized to ensure that personnel and their families do not feel isolated and continue to experience the warmth of festive traditions despite being away from their native places.

He also appealed to everyone to embrace the spirit of harmony and togetherness and to actively contribute towards nation-building.

DC Reasi Approves 311 Cases Under Mission YUVA

Observer News Service

REASI: Deputy Commissioner Reasi, Kumar Abhishek chaired a meeting of the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) to review Mission YUVA proposals, submitted through the Skill and Business Development Unit.

After detailed scrutiny and evaluation, 311 cases were approved for financial assistance and institutional support. The DC directed banks to ensure expeditious processing and timely disbursement of the approved cases. Banks were also instructed to provide clear reasons for any case rejections to maintain transparency and accountability in scheme implementation.

Later, the DC reviewed the progress of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban). The Executive Officer -Municipal Council briefed the chair on eligibility criteria, payment disbursement, recovery status and the physical and financial progress under the housing scheme. The DC directed concerned authorities to initiate recovery from beneficiaries who have not commenced construction even after receiving assistance. He instructed officials to personally engage with beneficiaries to motivate early initiation of construction.

HEALTH & MEDICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE, ANANTNAG COLLEGE CAMPUS, DIALGAM ANANTNAG J&K-192210

Subject: Engagement of Dr Arshad Hussain Bhat as Senior Resident (In-Service) in the Department of Radio-Diagnosis, GMC Anantnag in pursuance to Govt. Order No. 113-JK(HME) of 2026 dated 19.02.2026

**ORDER NO. : 157 GMCA OF 2026
DATED: 02-03-2026**

Whereas, Dr. Arshad Hussain Bhat, Medical Officer (Block Mattan), was provisionally engaged as Senior Resident (In-Service) in the Department of Radio-Diagnosis, Government Medical College, Anantnag, vide Office Order No. 416-GMCA of 2025 dated 30.07.2025; and

Whereas, the said provisional engagement was subsequently cancelled vide Order No. 554-GMCA of 2025 dated 29.09.2025 on account of non-joining within the stipulated period and non-fulfilment of requisite formalities; and

Whereas, the Health & Medical Education Department, Government of Jammu & Kashmir, vide Government Order No. 113-JK(HME) of 2026 dated 19-02-2026, has accorded sanction to the deputation of Dr. Arshad Hussain Bhat, Medical Officer, Block Mattan, to Government Medical College, Anantnag for undergoing tenure posting/training course as Senior Resident in the Department of Radio-Diagnosis for a period of three years with immediate effect, on standard terms and conditions of deputation; thereby curing the procedural deficiency which led to the cancellation.

Whereas, the Department of Radio-Diagnosis, GMC Anantnag, is presently facing deficiency of Senior Resident staff, which is adversely affecting patient care services, emergency diagnostic support, and academic activities of the institution; and

Whereas, in view of the sanctioned deputation by the Administrative Department and the existing staff deficiency in the Department of Radio-Diagnosis, the grounds which led to issuance of the cancellation order no longer subsist and restoration of engagement is considered necessary in the interest of patient care and institutional functioning;

Now, consequent upon Government Order No. 113-JK(HME) of 2026 dated 19-02-2026, the Order No. 554-GMCA of 2025 dated 29-09-2025 is hereby revoked, and the previously engaged senior resident namely Dr. Arshad Hussain Bhat S/O Mohammad Siddiq Bhat R/O Bijbehara Anantnag vide order dated 30.07.2025 is allowed to join, subject to fulfilment of all requisite formalities and terms laid down in the above-referred Government Order.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- Before joining the Department, the selected candidate shall submit an undertaking in the office of the Administrative Officer, Govt. Medical College Anantnag duly attested by the Judicial Magistrate (1st Class) to the effect that:
 - I will not participate in any kind of strike during the period of my tenure engagement. In the event I proceeded on strike, my tenure engagement shall be terminated without any notice as this service is covered under ESMA Act.
 - I shall remain disciplined during the tenure period, any kind of misconduct shall make me liable for termination without any prior notice.
 - I am not involved in any criminal activity nor is there is any FIR/Court case pending/registered against me in any criminal department or police station/Hon'ble Court.
 - I shall not claim any Experience Certificate in case I leave Senior Resident-ship before completion of first six months.
 - I shall not leave the course/senior residency midway and in case I leave the course midway I shall be liable to penalties as mentioned in the Govt. Order No. 113-JK(HME) of 2026 dated 19.02.2026
 - I will not indulge in any private practice. In case I am found doing private practice my appointment shall be liable for termination without any notice.
 - If the information furnished by me in the application form is found wrong at any point of time, I shall be liable to be punished under rules including confiscation of the Registration of the Doctor.
- In-service (PSC confirmed) candidates shall be paid salary as per their LPC. The PSC confirmed appointees are required to furnish the NOC/Relieving from Director Health Services concerned before their joining, failing which they will not be allowed to join.
- The candidate(s) is/are required to join in the office of the Administrative Officer, GMC Anantnag within 14 days from the date of issuance of this order falling which the order shall be deemed to have cancelled.

No. GMCA/Estt/2026/273-42
Dated: 02-03-2026

DIPK-11546-25
DT: 04/03/2026

Principal/Dean,
Govt. Medical College,
Anantnag.

Spain Denies US Permission to Use Bases to Attack Iran

War in the Middle East risked 'playing Russian roulette' with millions of lives: Sanchez

AP

MADRID: Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez again criticised the US and Israel's military actions in Iran, standing firm on Wednesday against trade threats from Washington and warning that the war in the Middle East risked "playing Russian roulette" with millions of lives.

"We are not going to be complicit in something that is bad for the world and is also contrary to our values and interests, just out of fear of reprisals from someone," Sanchez said in a televised address.

President Donald Trump on Tuesday threatened to end US trade with Spain because of Spain's refusal to allow the US to use joint military bases in the country in its attacks on Iran.

Sanchez has called the US and

Israeli attacks on Iran an "unjustifiable" and "dangerous" military intervention.

It's not clear how Trump would cut off trade with Spain, which is a member of the European Union. The EU negotiates trade on behalf of all its 27 member states.

On Wednesday, Sanchez expressed concern that the attacks on Iran could lead to another costly military quagmire in the Middle East, similar to the past American interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"In short, the position of the government of Spain can be summarised in four words," Sanchez said. "No to the war."

The EU said Wednesday it would protect its interests and work to stabilise its trade relationship with the US, with which it struck a trade deal last year after months of economic uncer-



tainty over Trump's tariff blitz.

"We stand in full solidarity with all member states and all their citizens and, through our common trade policy, stand ready to act if necessary to safeguard EU interests," said European Commission spokesperson

Olof Gill.

After Spain denied US use of its bases, Trump on Tuesday said "we could use their base if we want," referencing the Rota and Morón installations in southern Spain that the US and Spain share, but which remain under

Spanish command. "We could just fly in and use it," Trump said. "Nobody's going to tell us not to use it, but we don't have to."

Tuesday's threats from Washington were just the latest instance of the US president wielding the threat of tariffs or trade embargoes as punishment. The US Supreme Court last month struck down Trump's far-reaching global tariffs, saying emergency powers do not allow the president to unilaterally impose sweeping tariffs.

However, Trump maintains that the court allows him to instead impose full-scale embargoes on other nations of his choosing.

Spain has not had any direct contact with the US since Trump's criticisms, Economy Minister Carlos Cuerpo said Wednesday.

"I want to send a message of

calm," Cuerpo told Spanish radio station Cadena Ser. "Beyond those comments (by Trump), there have not been any more moves (by the US)."

Spain's main business groups expressed concerns over the US trade threat, calling the US a "key partner from an economic and political standpoint."

"We trust that our trade relations will ultimately not be affected in any way," the Spanish business chambers CEO, CEPYME and ATA said Tuesday. "Last year, Spain's central bank issued a report that concluded Europe's fourth-largest economy was relatively cushioned compared to the EU average when it came to exposure to tariffs by Trump."

Spain's exports and imports with the US accounted for 4.4 per cent of GDP, the Bank of Spain said, while trade with the

US for the EU as a whole was 10.1 per cent.

Exports of Spanish goods to the US accounted for 1 per cent of Spain's GDP, or 16 billion euros (USD 18.6 billion), making it Spain's sixth largest export market for goods, the bank concluded.

Spain's position on the Iran conflict is the latest flare-up in its relationship with the Trump administration.

Spain was an outspoken critic of Israel's war in Gaza and attracted Trump's ire last year when it backed out of NATO's pledge to increase defence spending by members to 5 per cent of GDP. At the time, Spain said it could meet its estimated defence needs by spending less — just 2.1 per cent of its GDP — a move that Trump roundly criticised and also threatened with tariffs in response.

Whoever Leads Iran Next Is a Target: Israel

AP

DUBAI: Israel's defence minister on Wednesday threatened whoever Iran picks to be the country's next supreme leader, saying he will be "a target for elimination."

Katz's comments came on a day Iran is set to choose a Supreme Leader, the second time since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

"It does not matter what his name is or the place where he hides," the Israeli defence minister stressed. "The Prime Minister and I have instructed the IDF to prepare and act by all means to carry out the mission as an integral part of the objectives of war," he said.

Katz said that Israel will "continue to act with full force, together with our American partners, to crush Iran's capabilities".

Israel targeted a building on Tuesday associated with Iran's Assembly of Experts, which will select the new



supreme leader. Israel with support of the United States assassinated the 86-year-old Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei on Saturday that started the war now spread across the region.

Relentless US-Israeli bombing of Iran has so far killed 1,045 people, including 148 school girls in Southern Iran, reports said on Wednesday.

Iran's Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs offered the toll, saying it represented the number of bodies so far identified and prepared for burial.

Responding to the Israeli

threats Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) issued its most intense threat yet as the war in the Middle East escalated Wednesday, saying it was prepared for the "complete destruction of the region's military and economic infrastructure."

The Guard issued the statement via Iranian state television.

"The continued mischief and deception by the United States in the region will come at the cost of the complete destruction of the region's military and economic infrastructure," it said.

Canada PM Calls Iran War Rupture of World Order

AP

MELBOURNE: Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said on Wednesday he regretted that the Iran war was an extreme example of a rupturing world order in which countries increasingly act without respect for international norms and laws.

Carney was speaking at the Lowy Institute, a Sydney-based international policy think tank, during the Australian leg of a trade-focused, three-nation visit that began in India. He will address the Australian Parliament on Thursday before flying to Japan on Friday.

"Geo-strategically, hegemons are increasingly acting without constraint or respect for international norms or laws, while others bear the consequences. Now the extremes of this disruption are being played out in real time in the Middle East," Carney said.

Carney built on themes that he laid out at the



World Economic Forum in January in Davos, Switzerland, in a speech that garnered widespread attention. He argued the world order was undergoing a rupture and the old norms of the rules-based order were being erased.

Canada supported efforts to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and from threatening international peace and security, Carney said.

"We are actively taking on the world as it is, not passively waiting for a world we wish to be. But we also take this position with some regret because the current conflict is another example of the failure of the international order," he said.

Pakistan Targets Bagram Airbase in Afghanistan

Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan targeted the famed Bagram airbase in Afghanistan as its operation was going against the Afghan Taliban over their alleged failure to stop terrorist attacks from their soil, media reports said on Wednesday.

Pakistan launched Operation Ghazab lil Haq (Righteous Fury) on the night of February 26, following alleged Afghan Taliban attacks on 53 locations along the over 2,600 km border.

State-run PTV in a post on X said that Pakistan carried out a "major attack on Bagram Air Base" as it was giving a "befitting response to Afghan Taliban aggression".

"Pakistan continues to conduct vigorous ground and air operations against the unprovoked aggression of the Afghan Taliban," it said.

PTV often quoted unnamed security sources for reports on the Afghanistan attacks, but for the Bagram attack, it quoted The New York Times.

"An aircraft hangar and



two warehouses at Bagram Air Base were destroyed in a Pakistani attack, satellite images of which have also emerged," PTV reported, quoting The NYT.

It further said that Afghanistan's Ministry of Defence also confirmed the Pakistani airstrike, adding that Pakistan carried out more than 50 airstrikes on military targets in Afghanistan in the past week.

Quoting defence experts, the channel further said that Pakistan's "successful operation" on Bagram Air Base caused heavy damage to the Afghan Taliban regime.

"By targeting Bagram Air Base, Pakistan sent a clear

message to the Afghan Taliban regime that it can operate anywhere in Afghanistan," it quoted an unnamed defence expert as saying.

The channel further said that despite Pakistan's repeated warnings, terrorism continues from Afghanistan, in which weapons left by the US have also been used.

Separately, sources said that Pakistan security forces carried out targeted attacks on the defence position of the Afghan Taliban on the border with Balochistan province on the night of March 3-4, targeting the "hideouts and posts that were being used by outlawed elements and their facilitators".

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