

From Page 1

Heightened vigilance ...

to uphold harmony and contribute to an atmosphere of calm and goodwill in society. Preserving peace and sustaining the progress of society is a shared responsibility that rests equally upon each one of us."

Meanwhile, in the wake of protests erupting in the Valley following the death of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini in a US-Israel joint air strike, the Jammu and Kashmir Police had earlier urged people to exercise restraint and refrain from violence and provocation.

They also warned strict legal action against investigators of violence and miscreants involved in unlawful activities.

Protests against Khomeini's killing continued in the Valley for the second consecutive day on Monday.

At least 14 people -- eight protesters and six security forces personnel -- were injured in clashes as security forces used mild force to disperse protesters at a few places in the Valley.

"In view of the recent developments in the Middle-East, we respect the right of citizens to peacefully express through lawful means. However, incidents of rioting, stone-pelting, clashes and disruption of public order at some places are not acceptable," Kashmir Zone Police said on X.

Police said that violence, destruction of property and confrontation with security forces lead to injuries, loss of life, restrictions, closure of educational institutions, and hardship for families, traders, students and daily wagers.

"We appeal to all sections of the society to exercise restraint and refrain from violence and provocation," it said.

Police said they will take strict legal action against investigators of violence and miscreants involved in unlawful activities.

"Authorities remain committed to uphold the Rule of Law and protecting life and property," the police added.

NAC reviews ...

prevailing security situation.

"Lt Gen Pratik Sharma, #ArmyCdrNC, chaired a meeting in #Srinagar to review the evolving security situation in Kashmir Valley. #NorthernCommand remains resolute in its commitment to ensure safety & security of citizens of #JammuKashmir," the Army said.

Protests have rocked many parts of the valley after the assassination of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha held in-depth deliberations on the prevailing security scenario in the UT of Jammu Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GoC-in-C), Northern Command; Shri Nalin Prabhat, DGP, J&K; Lieutenant General Prashant Srivastava, GoC 15 Corps and Major General Balbir Singh, MGS, Northern Command at Lok Bhavan, Srinagar.

Edu institutions ...

till March 7, 2026," Education Minister Sakina Itoo said on Tuesday.

With protests brewing, the government had on March 1 ordered closure of educational institutions in the Valley for two days.

Agitations against the top Shia cleric's killing continued for the third consecutive day on Tuesday with thousands of people taking to streets in several parts of Kashmir, including in Srinagar city.

The protests have largely broken out in areas with major Shia population.

Modi speaks ...

the developments.

"It (CCS) expressed serious concern over the safety and security of the large Indian expatriate community in the region," an official statement issued after the CCS meeting said.

India has in the past successfully evacuated thousands of Indians from different parts of the world, including West Asia, amidst conflicts.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has said Indian missions across the region are in continuous contact with Indian citizens and helpines have been activated.

Khomeini was killed in a major attack on Iran launched by Israel and the United States on Saturday. His death was confirmed on Sunday.

US President Donald Trump has said the heavy and pinpoint bombing on Iran would continue through the week or for as long as necessary.

For 'Viksit Bharat' ...

of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Dr. Jitendra Singh, Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) Jugal Kishore, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Secretary DARPG Rachna Shah, Additional Secretary DARPG Puneet Yadav, Joint Secretary DARPG Sarita Chauhan, Commissioner Secretary, General Administration Department M Raju, senior IAS and JKAS officers, retired civil servants and participants from across the country were present on the occasion.

In his keynote address, the Chief Minister said, "The truth is that Viksit Bharat or a developed India will only be a reality if all of India develops. A developed India will not become a reality if that development is confined only to a handful of states or regions."

Stressing the importance of balanced growth, he remarked that from Jammu and Kashmir in the north to Assam in the east, Gujarat in the west and Tamil Nadu and Kerala in the south, every region must experience tangible progress. "Unless all of us see that development and that progress, Viksit Bharat will remain a dream and merely a slogan," he cautioned.

Highlighting the pathway to national transformation, the Chief Minister advocated a bottom-up governance model. "India develops through conferences like this and through taking a ground-up approach rather than a top-down approach," he observed.

He underlined that development must be anchored in good governance at the district level. "If our districts perform, our states and Union Territories perform. If our states perform, our country performs. And if our country performs, the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047 may perhaps be realised even before the timeline we have set for ourselves," he said optimistically.

The Chief Minister noted that such conferences help policy-makers and administrators avoid "reinventing the wheel" by facilitating the exchange of successful models and innovations.

"For far too long, we lived in silos where sharing information was discouraged rather than encouraged," he reflected, adding that recent years have witnessed more collaborative and holistic governance practices.

However, he cautioned that governance challenges rarely have universal solutions. "There is no quick fix solution. What works in one state may not work in another. What works in J&K may not work in Gujarat or Maharashtra. But we can certainly adapt and modify successful practices to suit our local conditions," he said.

The Chief Minister, who was the guest of honour on the occasion, also spoke extensively about the transformative role of technology in governance. Referring to the shift towards digital administration, he said, "One reform that has made a huge difference is the e-office system. Paper files have virtually

disappeared. We have come a long way to a point where I rarely see a paper file."

He noted that digitisation has enhanced efficiency and accountability, though it has also introduced new challenges. "Every file is now time-stamped. Technology has made life easier but also more transparent and demanding," he observed.

He further highlighted the use of virtual meetings, which have significantly improved coordination with district administrations. "Earlier, district collectors had to travel to Jammu or Srinagar for meetings, and that would happen once or twice a year. Now it happens at the drop of a hat," he said, while advising disciplined use of such facilities to avoid unnecessary disruptions to fieldwork.

Emphasising practical reforms, the Chief Minister called for genuine implementation of citizen-centric initiatives. "If we have a single window, it should actually function as a single window," he remarked candidly. "In my experience, sometimes a single window leads to another window and then a wall behind it. That is not what governance should look like."

Describing conferences like the present one as platforms for both knowledge-sharing and relationship-building, the Chief Minister said, "These allow us to share best practices, but they also cement relationships. Face-to-face contact makes it easier to maintain communication and coordinate effectively."

He emphasised that elected representatives and administrators share a common objective. "Whether it is myself, Dr. Jitendra Singh Sahab or the Hon'ble MP, we have the same goal as you -- to ensure that people receive what they expect from us in development, governance and services," he stated.

He said citizens deserve a government that delivers on its promises in education, health, infrastructure and every other sector.

Expressing gratitude to the Union Minister for choosing Jammu as the venue, the Chief Minister extended an invitation to hold future conferences in Srinagar. "I hope that maybe next year we can entice you to come to Srinagar and keep this process going," he said warmly.

Concluding his address, the Chief Minister welcomed all delegates and expressed confidence that the deliberations would contribute meaningfully to strengthening governance frameworks across the country.

Special NIA ...

GoPro Hero 12 Black Camera, bearing serial No.C3501325471706, which is relevant for establishing pre-attack reconnaissance, movement and operational preparation of the terrorist module involved in the Pahalgam attack.

"A lawful notice under the BNSS was issued to the manufacturer GoPro B V, seeking details regarding the supply chain and activation of the said device.

"In its official response, GoPro B V has informed that the said camera was supplied to AE Group International Limited, a distributor based in the People's Republic of China; and the camera was activated on January 30, 2024, at Dongguan, People's Republic of China.

"The manufacturer has further stated that it does not possess downstream transaction details or end-user records of the device. The activation, initial use and commercial trail of the said device lie within the territorial jurisdiction of the People's Republic of China, and the information necessary to trace the purchaser, end-user and associated technical records can only be obtained through judicial assistance of the Chinese authorities," the application read.

The court said since India and China are not signatories to any mutual treaty, i.e. Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty/Agreement (MLAT), on the subject, in such an eventuality, assistance as requested can be sought under the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) as both the nations have ratified the UNTOC.

The order said the Ministry of Home Affairs has given its concurrence for the issuance of the Letter Rogatory to China for seeking legal assistance in the investigation of the case.

The information sought is very important for "establishing the chain of custody, user, attribution and evidentiary linkage of seized device which was supplied to AE Group International Limited, a distributor based in the People's Republic of China", the judge said.

"All the requisites are complied by the applicant as such in exercise of powers under section 112 BNSS, I allow the application and the Letter Rogatory is issued to the competent judicial authority of the People's Republic of China for seeking assistance and tracing the purchaser, end user and associated technical records to unearth the larger conspiracy," the order read.

The court also laid down procedural directions for uploading and forwarding translated copies in Chinese through the appropriate diplomatic channels.

The application has been disposed of and made part of the main case file, with a copy of the order forwarded to the NIA for compliance.

LG Sinha, Omar ...

occasion of Holi, I convey my warm greetings to the people. I hope that the festival of colours, which is celebrated with traditional fervour, heralds happiness and success for all."

"May this festival of colours bring joy and prosperity in society and foster the spirit of harmony among our citizens," he added.

In his message, CM Abdullah described Holi as a vibrant celebration symbolising togetherness, joy and the triumph of harmony over discord. He expressed hope that the festival of colours would further strengthen communal harmony, promote mutual respect and deepen the enduring bonds of brotherhood across the region.

He prayed for sustained peace, prosperity and progress in Jammu and Kashmir and expressed confidence that the festival would usher in renewed hope and happiness for all.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary also extended his greetings to the people, stating that Holi holds deep religious and cultural significance and is celebrated with great fervour and enthusiasm by people cutting across religious and social lines.

"My warm greetings to all. May this auspicious occasion fill our lives with colours of joy, strength and good health," he said.

Choudhary observed that Jammu and Kashmir has always stood as an example of harmony, mutual respect and brotherhood, where people wholeheartedly participate in each other's festivals and celebrations, reinforcing the spirit of unity in diversity.

JK records ..

Kupwara (52,698.1 kanals), Pulwama (42,730.8 kanals) and Anantnag (36,984 kanals). Srinagar district reported 13,862.95 kanals under encroachment, it said.

In the Jammu division, against a total of 83,51,454 kanals and 61 marlas of state land, 14,00,048 kanals and 65 marlas were reported under encroachment, it said. The same quantum of land has corresponding entries expunged in revenue records.

Rajouri district recorded the highest encroachment at 2,73,848 kanals and 12 marlas, followed by Reasi (2,26,857 kanals and 6 marlas), Ramban (1,73,832 kanals), Jammu (1,45,487 kanals and 6 marlas) and Kathua (1,30,403 kanals and 1.5 marlas).

The overall grand total across both divisions stands at over 14 lakh kanals under encroachment in the Jammu division and over 3.27 lakh kanals in the Kashmir division.

Giving details about land transferred since 2019 to various government departments, the officials said that 68,190 kanals and 19 marlas of land have been transferred to state

and UT government departments and agencies, without charging transfer value in accordance with delegated powers.

Additionally, 7,495 kanals and 10 marlas were transferred to Central government departments and agencies, fetching a transfer value of Rs 10,506.75 lakh, calculated as per prevailing stamp rates, they said.

The year-wise data shows that the Administrative Council approved the transfer of 44,130 kanals and 15 marlas to UT departments and 7,495 kanals and 10 marlas to Central departments between 2019 and 2024.

The Revenue Department transferred 8,103 kanals and 1 marla, divisional commissioners transferred 9,086 kanals and 19 marlas, and deputy commissioners transferred 6,870 kanals and 4 marlas under their respective delegated powers.

As per the data, the competent authorities include the Administrative Council for transfers beyond 500 kanals, the Revenue Department for 100 to 500 kanals, divisional commissioners for 10 to 100 kanals, and deputy commissioners for up to 10 kanals.

Leopards, bears ...

compared to road transport.

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Jammu, Uchit Singhal, said the initiative reflects the division's growing logistical capabilities and commitment to safe animal transportation.

"The Jammu Division is moving forward with new initiatives every day. Earlier, 23 exotic bulls were transported from Bengaluru to Kashmir by rail. Now, in another landmark step, 200 animals are being transported to MGR Chennai by train," Singhal said.

He further said rail transport ensures a comparatively stress-free journey for animals, even in adverse weather conditions.

"We have deployed a team of experienced veterinarians and animal keepers to monitor the health and safety of the animals throughout the journey," he added.

Officials said the translocation of animals was undertaken with strict compliance to Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) norms to ensure proper arrangements for food, water and welfare during transit.

Railway authorities termed the operation one of the longest wildlife transits undertaken in India, and said the successful execution will set a new benchmark for organised and safe animal transportation by rail.

Raghvender Singh, Public Relations Inspector, Jammu Division, said the initiative demonstrates the evolving capabilities of the railways in handling specialised cargo with precision and care

Indian embassy ...

The US-Israeli strikes have killed at least 787 people, the Iranian Red Crescent Society said. At least 11 people were killed in Israel, according to reports.

Pertinent, as the conflict in West Asia widened, India on Tuesday emphasised the interest of one crore Indian nationals in the region and voiced concern over consequences for the Indian economy due to possible disruptions in energy supplies even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi discussed the evolving situation with leaders of Oman, Kuwait and Qatar.

In its second statement since the US-Israel strikes on Iran and Tehran's subsequent retaliation, India once again called for "dialogue and diplomacy" to end the conflict, noting that New Delhi has critical stakes in the security and stability of West Asia and the current developments "evoke great anxiety".

New Delhi said it will continue to closely monitor the evolving situation and take relevant decisions in the national interest, adding it is in touch with the governments in the region as well as other key partners.

"In recent days, we have not only witnessed an intensification of the conflict but also its spread to other nations. The destruction and deaths have mounted, even as normal life and economic activities come to a halt," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

"As a proximate neighbour with critical stakes in the security and stability of the region, these developments evoke great anxiety."

The ministry said almost one crore Indian citizens are living in West Asia and their safety and well-being is of "utmost priority" for New Delhi. "We cannot be impervious to any development that negatively affects them," it said.

The conflict in West Asia intensified with Iran continuing to pound several Gulf countries in retaliation for the joint attack against it by Israeli and US. The US and Israel have also carried out fresh strikes on Iran.

As part of its offensive, Iran has blocked the strategically located Strait of Hormuz shipping route triggering surge in global oil prices.

"Our trade and energy supply chains also traverse this geography. Any major disruption has serious consequences for the Indian economy," the ministry said.

The Strait of Hormuz handles nearly 20 per cent of the world's total oil and gas supplies. About 50 per cent of India's oil imports or roughly 2.6 million barrels a day pass through the Strait.

Iran has carried out a wave of attacks mainly targeting Israel and American military bases in several Gulf countries including the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

The Iranian retaliation increased after Tehran announced early Sunday that its Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini had been killed in the Israel-US strike.

"As a country whose nationals are prominent in the global workforce, India is also firmly opposed to attacks on merchant shipping. Already, some Indian nationals have lost their lives or are missing as a result of such attacks in the last few days," it said.

"In this background, India strongly reiterates its call for dialogue and diplomacy. We raise our voice clearly in favour of an early end to the conflict. Already, many lives have been regrettably lost and we express our grief in that regard," it added.

It is learnt that at least three Indian nationals were killed in Iranian attacks on two merchant vessels in the waters off Oman.

The statement by the MEA, however, was silent on the killing of Ayatollah Khomeini.

The ministry said Indian embassies and consulates in the affected countries remain in close touch with Indian nationals and community organisations, issuing regular advisories.

"They have also extended all possible help to those stranded by the conflict. The embassies and consulates will continue to be proactive in addressing various consular aspects of this conflict," it said.

"We are in touch with the governments of this region as well as other key partners. The prime minister and external affairs minister have held discussions with their counterparts," it added.

Following his phone conversation with the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, PM Modi said India stands "firmly" in solidarity with the Gulf nation and strongly condemns any violation of its "sovereignty and territorial integrity".

"We emphasised the urgent need to restore peace and stability in the region through dialogue and diplomacy. I also conveyed my appreciation for his continued support and care for the Indian community in Qatar during this challenging time," he said.

The prime minister described his phone conversation with Crown Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah as "productive" and conveyed to the him that India condemns violation of Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

"We underscored the significance of dialogue and diplo-

macy in restoring regional peace and stability. Appreciated the Kuwaiti leadership's continued support to ensure safety and well-being of the Indian community in Kuwait," Modi said on social media.

In his phone conversation with Oman Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, Modi "deeply appreciated" Oman's continued support to the Indian community.

"Condemned the violation of Oman's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We agreed that sustained diplomatic engagement is essential for earliest restoration of regional peace and stability," the prime minister said.

India had issued the first statement on February 28, hours after the US and Israel launched the military offensives against Iran.

"We had expressed our deep concern at the commencement of the conflict in Iran and the Gulf region on February 28. Even at that time, India had urged all sides to exercise restraint, avoid escalation and prioritise the safety of civilians," the ministry said.

"Unfortunately, in the holy month of Ramadan, the situation in the region has deteriorated significantly and continuously," it said.

Since Sunday, Modi has held phone conversation with President of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Crown Prince and Prime Mibnister of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman and King of Bahrain Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa.

The US military has said six of its personnel were killed in the conflict so far. The US-Israeli strikes have killed at least 787 people, the Iranian Red Crescent Society said. According to reports, at least 11 people were killed in Israel.

In a related development, the Indian embassy in Iran has relocated most Indian students from Tehran.

"Due to the heightened risk perception in Tehran city, the Embassy of India has relocated most Indian students who were in Tehran," the Indian mission said.

The students were taken to locations outside of Tehran. The embassy arranged transportation, food and accommodation for the students.

India has ...

coverage, effectively halting tanker movements. A top oil ministry official, who wished not to be named, said the government is monitoring the situation "on a daily and hourly basis" and is confident of navigating through the crisis that by some estimates may last a week or ten days.

While the country has crude oil stocks to last 25 days and fuel to last a similar duration, contingency plans -- including using stockpile in strategic petroleum reserves, commercial stocks, and diversified sourcing from the US, Russia, West Africa, and Latin America -- will ensure continuity even if the crisis lasts longer.

While immediate shortages are unlikely, rising crude prices and higher freight and insurance costs could impact India's import bill and inflation.

Separately, the ministry in a statement said Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri "briefed the media on the country's preparedness in the current circumstances" and it was informed that "the country is well stocked with crude oil and inventories of key petroleum products including petrol, diesel and ATF to deal with short-term disruptions arising from the Middle East." It, however, did not give details of the stocks.

"The Ministry has established a 24x7 control room to continuously monitor the supply and stock position of petroleum products across the country," it said.

"At present, the government is reasonably comfortable in terms of stocks. Safeguarding the interests of Indian consumers remains the highest priority. Based on continuous monitoring, the government is cautiously optimistic that phased measures can be taken, if required, to further mitigate the situation." India is the third largest importer, fourth largest refiner, and fifth largest exporter of petroleum products globally.

"It was further apprised that in the last few years, India has ensured both availability and affordability of energy for its population by diversifying its sources. Indian energy companies now have access to energy supplies that are not routed through the Strait of Hormuz.

"Such cargoes will remain available and help mitigate supplies that may be temporarily affected enroute through the Strait of Hormuz," the statement said.

The official said that while this year crude sourced from the countries that use the Strait of Hormuz is above 50 per cent due to a drop in Russian cargoes, the average over the past couple of years has been 40 per cent. The remaining 60 per cent is not shipped from the Strait.

Crude oil -- the raw material that is turned into fuels like petrol and diesel in refineries -- in storage tanks, pipelines and on ships in transit is enough to meet the country's requirement for 25 days. Besides, there are stock of fuel in refineries, deposits, pipelines and other storage facilities that could meet demand for a similar duration, he said.

On top of this, there is crude oil stored in underground strategic reserves.

The country's commercial crude oil stocks, including strategic petroleum reserves at Mangalore, Padur, and Visakhapatnam, total around 100 million barrels. This, along with additional refined product inventories, provides a substantial buffer against short-term disruptions.

The official said India was looking to import LPG even before the Iran crisis broke out last weekend. An issue with the pipeline in Saudi Arabia, the principal supplier of LPG to India, had created a deficit of 120,000 tonnes.

"There are a large number of producers, and we are tapping them," the official said.

With imports via the Strait of Hormuz averaging roughly 2.5 million barrels per day -- about half of India's just over 5 million bpd total crude imports -- these combined reserves could theoretically cover around 40-45 days of imports in a crude disruption scenario, he said.

Additional refined product inventories would extend effective coverage further.

However, the immediate impact will be on prices. Brent, the global benchmark, crossed USD 80 per barrel, roughly 10 per cent more since the Iran crisis. For India, higher prices means higher import bill.

India spent USD 137 billion on crude oil imports in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2025. During April 2025 to January 2026 -- the first ten months of the current fiscal year -- it spent USD 100.4 billion on imports of 206.3 million tonnes of crude oil.

The United States and Israel launched military strikes on targets in Iran over the weekend. Tehran retaliated with missiles and drones aimed at Israel and countries hosting US forces, including the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

Media reports suggest the conflict has effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz, a key conduit for global energy flows. Roughly one-third of the world's seaborne crude oil exports and about 20 per cent of liquefied natural gas shipments transit the narrow waterway.

India, the world's third-largest oil importer, imports roughly half of its crude needs through the narrow Strait. Its mainstay liquefied natural gas (LNG) supplier in Qatar also uses the strait to ship the fuel to India.

In case of closure, India can tap suppliers in West Africa, Latin America and the US to make up for the shortfall from the Middle-East. India could also tap Russian oil to make up for the deficit.

India had agreed to wind down purchases of Russian oil as part of a trade deal with the US -- a deal which now sits in limbo after the US Supreme Court struck down US President Donald Trump's country-based tariffs. (Agencies)