

"I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it."  
—Thomas Jefferson

*Inking the Truth*



**VK Saxena appointed as Ladakh LG**

**JAMMU:** Vinai Kumar Saxena, Lt Governor of Delhi, has been appointed as Ladakh's LG in place of Kavinder Gupta, who has been named Himachal Pradesh Governor on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi has been appointed West Bengal Governor and Lt Gen Syed Ata Hasnain (ret'd) named new Bihar Governor as part of major gubernatorial appointments effected by President Droupadi Murmu on ▶ P11

**Sukhoi-30 goes missing in Assam**

**GUWAHATI:** A Su-30 MKI fighter jet of the Indian Air Force went missing on Thursday shortly after taking off from the Jorhat airbase in Assam, officials said.

Communication with the Russian-origin aircraft was lost at 7:42 pm, they said, adding a search and ▶ P11

**Modi calls for 'swift' end to West Asia, Ukraine conflicts**

PM speaks to Macron; seeks return to dialogue

**NEW DELHI:** With West Asia on the brink of a wider regional war, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday called for a "swift end" to the escalating confrontation in the region saying no issue can be resolved solely through military conflict.

Modi's remarks following his wide-ranging talks with Finnish President Alexander Stubb came as the United States and Israel's war with Iran entered the sixth day with both sides launching fresh strikes, significantly heightening tensions across the region.

Stubb strongly backed India's bid for a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council, arguing that it is of "utmost importance" along with larger reform of the global multilateral system to reflect the current geopolitical realities.

Following the Modi-Stubb talks, the two sides elevated their bilateral relations to "Strategic Partnership" in digitalisation and sustainability and vowed to double annual bilateral trade by 2030.

India and Finland also signed three agreements including one on migration and mobility that will facilitate mobility of Indian talents to the European nation.

In his media statement, Modi said the India-Finland strategic partnership in the digitalisation and sustainability will energise cooperation in many high-technology areas including AI, 6G telecom, clean energy and quantum computing.

The two sides also agreed to deepen cooperation in key sectors such as defence, space, semiconductors, and critical minerals.

The crisis in West Asia figured prominently in the Modi-Stubb talks. ▶ P11



**India bids condolences over Khamenei's death**

**NEW DELHI:** India on Thursday condoled the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei against the backdrop of scathing criticism of the government by opposition parties for its silence on the assassination as well as on sinking of an Iranian ship by the US off the Sri Lankan coast.

Six days after Khamenei was killed in a joint strike on Tehran by the US and Israel, ▶ P11

**Iran yet to choose new supreme leader: official**

**NEW DELHI:** Iran has not yet elected the successor of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Syed Ali Khamenei, who was assassinated in a joint US-Israeli airstrike last week, a senior Iranian official said Thursday.

Ayatollah Dr Abdul Majeed Hakeemela, the representative of Iran's supreme leader in India, also said that the process to elect a new leader is still ▶ P11

**Iran Conflict: Restrictions remain in force across Kashmir on day 5**

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**SRINAGAR:** Normal life in Kashmir was affected for the fifth consecutive day as partial restrictions on movement of people remained in force as a precautionary measure.

The restrictions were imposed on Monday after spontaneous protests broke out across Kashmir a day earlier against the killing of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in US-Israel joint strikes.

Chief minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday held a meeting with civil society representatives and religious leaders as part of efforts to bring the situation back to normalcy.

After the meeting, Abdullah appealed to people to maintain peace while expressing grief and anger in "mosques, shrines and



Imambaras". The government has shut educational institutions till Saturday, and reduced mobile internet speeds.

"Restrictions on the movement and assembly of

the people continued in many parts of Kashmir on Thursday," the officials said.

A large number of police and paramilitary CRPF personnel were deployed across the city to prevent ▶ P11

**Fight against terror must intensify, India tells UN**

**UNITED NATIONS:** India has called on the international community to act together against ISIS and Al Qaeda and their proxies, underlining that terrorism is an "existential threat" to international peace and security.

"Terrorism is an existential threat to international peace and security. It knows no borders, nationality, or race, and is a challenge that the international

community must combat collectively," First Secretary in the Permanent Mission of India to the UN Raghoo Puri said on Wednesday.

In remarks to the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UN-OCT) annual ambassadorial level briefing to Member States, Puri recalled the April 2025 terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam, carried out by The Resistance Front, a ▶ P11

**Nitish files nomination for RS polls**

**PATNA:** JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar on Thursday filed nomination papers for Rajya Sabha elections, marking a turning point in Bihar politics and virtually bringing the curtain down on his tenure as the state's longest-serving chief minister, paving the way for a new government in the ▶ P11



**Startup Outreach Prog under JKCIP at SKUAST-J Youth must become job creators through Agri advances: Abdullah**

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**JAMMU:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday highlighted the immense potential of agriculture and allied sectors in Jammu and Kashmir and urged the youth to transition from being job seekers to job creators by harnessing innovation and entrepreneurship in the sector.

He said initiatives such as the Jammu and Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project (JKCIP) are playing a crucial role in nurturing a vibrant startup ecosystem and promoting innovation-driven enterprises in the Union Territory.

"The youth must transition from being job seekers to job creators by harnessing innovation and entrepreneurship in agriculture and allied sectors in Jammu and Kashmir," Abdullah said while addressing a startup outreach programme organised under



**Warship strike troubling: CM**

**JAMMU:** Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday expressed concern over the reported sinking of an Iranian warship, saying the vessel and its crew were guests of India for a multilateral naval exercise.

This comes after a major escalation in West Asia after a US submarine torpedoed and sank an Iranian warship in international waters off the coast Sri Lanka on Wednesday. The vessel was returning from the Milan naval exercise hosted by India. Speaking to reporters here, Abdullah said the incident has caused anxiety within the Union ▶ P11

JKCIP at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST)-Jammu.

Emphasising the vast scope of agriculture, the chief minister said that when deciding which industries should be established in the region, agriculture offers the greatest potential for success.

"There is a misconception that Jammu and Kashmir's economy is driven solely by tourism. When I tell people that in our SGDP agriculture and horticulture are equally significant along with tourism, they are surprised. They have no idea how strong our agricultural ecosystem is," he said.

He added that agriculture and allied sectors such as horticulture, fisheries and apiculture together form a vast economic network and offer significant opportunities for young entrepreneurs.

Highlighting the limitations of government employment, Abdullah told ▶ P11

**No RCC, no payment: JK Govt to Treasuries**

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**SRINAGAR:** The Directorate of Geology & Mining, Jammu and Kashmir, has directed all treasuries across the Union Territory not to release payments to contractors or executing agencies involved in developmental works unless a valid Royalty Clearance Certificate (RCC) is produced.

According to an official communication issued by Director Geology & Mining S.P. Rukwal, JKAS, the directive has been sent to the Director, Accounts & Treasuries, Finance Department.

The order follows instructions issued during a review meeting held on February 27, 2026. The letter states that several departments and agencies—including NHAI, PMGSY, PWD

(R&B), I&FC, BRO/GREF, Jal Shakti Department, NHIDCL, Airports Authority of India and KRCL—have already been instructed not to release payments to firms or contractors for works involving consumption of minor minerals unless the RCC is obtained from the Geology & Mining Department. The Directorate has now requested the Finance Department to issue necessary directions to all treasuries of Jammu and Kashmir to strictly ensure that no payment is processed in favour of any agency or contractor without the mandatory Royalty Clearance Certificate. The move aims to ensure proper regulation of minor mineral extraction and royalty compliance in developmental projects across the Union Territory.

**Army Cdr reviews counter-terror Ops**

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**JAMMU:** Northern Army Commander Lt Gen Pratik Sharma visited the twin border districts of Poonch and Rajouri in Jammu and Kashmir and reviewed the prevailing security situation and ongoing counter-terrorism operations, officials said on Thursday.

The Army commander commended the troops for their high state of morale and professionalism while guarding the borderline.

"Lt Gen Pratik Sharma, Army Commander, Northern Command, visited Shahsitar in Poonch and Hanjanwali in Rajouri sector to review the prevailing security situation and ongoing counter-terrorism operations," the Army's Northern Command said on X.

The Army commander was briefed about the intelligence grid and focused operational capability enhancement measures—vital for sustained operations in a complex security landscape, it said.

Lt Gen Sharma also commended the troops for their high state of morale, professionalism and steadfast dedication under challenging conditions.




**NASHA MUKT JAMMU KASHMIR ABHIYAAN**

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