India's Kashmiris donate to war-hit Iranians

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Residents in Indian-administered Kashmir donated cash and precious metals yesterday to support Iranians affected by the Middle East war, while volunteers said some people also offered sheep or goats.

Muslim-majority Kashmir, which has a significant Shi'ite population, shares long-standing cultural and religious ties with Iran.

The Iranian embassy in New Delhi has shared several videos of Kashmiris donating to help them, and issued bank details where cash donations can be paid.

"We will never forget your kindness and humanity," it said on Sunday on its social media account. "Thank you, India."

Earlier this month, thousands of Kashmiris waved red, black and yellow flags during demonstrations following joint strikes by the United States and Israel that killed Iran's Ali Khamenei.

"Not only Shi'ites, but also the Sunni community is contributing... this reflects our unity and how we continue to stand with our brothers in Iran," said 29-year-old student Aiman Zehra.

"Iran may be an Islamic republic, but that's not the only reason we are helping them," she added. "When Palestinians needed aid, it was Iran that stood up to provide them with it."

Piles of Indian rupee banknotes were laid out on sheets, alongside gold jewellery, and copper and silver tea pots.

"Our aim is to show our solidarity with Iranians," said Afshana Khan, aged 30.

"We can contribute with whatever little we can afford, by way of donating gold, copper vessels and money," she added.

Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since their independence from British rule in 1947, and both claim the territory in full.

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