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CM defends 6.83% power tariff hike: 'Previous govts raised rates by 14-15%'

Assures 200 free units to eligible consumers through solar scheme; says Cabinet reshuffle will happen 'when necessary'; calls threats to Pandit employees serious



Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Aug 24: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday defended the government's decision to increase electricity tariffs by 6.83%, saying those questioning the hike should also remember that previous governments had raised power rates by more than 14%.

The Chief Minister while talking to reporters here, as per the

news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said his government had never promised that electricity rates would not increase.

He said the latest revision was a necessity rather than a decision the government took with satisfaction. "When did we ever say that electricity rates wouldn't rise?"

CM Omar said the government had [More on P6](#)

Lone cites NC manifesto to counter CM's claim over power tariff

Says Punjab gives 300 units free, Himachal 125

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Aug 24: Hours after Chief Minister Omar Abdullah claimed that the National Conference had not promised relaxation in electricity tariffs, Peoples Conference president Sajad Gani Lone shared a page from the party manifesto in which the NC had pledged to explore feasible ways to provide some respite in power tariff.

In a post on X, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Lone said he was attaching the relevant page of NC's manifesto to rejj the CM's memory. [More on P6](#)

Apni Party, PDP protest power tariff hike, demand rollback



Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Aug 24: Apni Party and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leaders and workers on Monday staged separate protests in Srinagar against the government's decision to increase electricity tariffs by an average 6.83 per cent, demanding immediate

rollback of the hike.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) Apni Party workers led by Provincial President Mohammad Ashraf Mir gathered at Press Colony, where police stopped them from proceeding in the form [More on P6](#)

LG Sinha celebrates Raksha Bandhan with DPS Baramulla students



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Aug 24: Lok Bhavan Jammu Kashmir on Monday hosted a special Raksha Bandhan celebrations for the students of Delhi Public School (DPS) Baramulla, at Srinagar.

As a part of the celebrations, the students tied sacred thread

of Rakhi to the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and exchanged greetings.

The Lieutenant Governor called upon the students to carry forward the true spirit of Raksha Bandhan. He encouraged the young minds to spread the message of peace, love, unity and [More on P6](#)

GOC 16 Corps reviews operational preparedness in Poonch forward areas

KT News Desk

Jammu, Aug 24: General Officer Commanding (GOC), White Knight Corps, Lieutenant General Prasanna Kishore Mishra on Monday visited the forward areas of the Poonch sector to review operational preparedness and assess the evolving security dynamics along the Line of Control (LoC).

Army spokesman in a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said the Corps Commander was accompanied by the GOC of Ace of Spades Division.

"GOC Mishra undertook a comprehensive review of the operational environment and interacted with [More on P6](#)

Hot, humid weather to prevail, brief rain spells likely: MeT

Day temp remains above normal; Sgr records 30.5°C, Jmu 34.3°C

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Aug 24: Jammu and Kashmir is likely to witness generally hot and humid weather over the coming days, with brief spells of rain and thundershowers at scattered places, the Meteorological Centre here said on Monday.

According to the latest forecast accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) brief spells of rain or thundershowers are likely at scattered places during the early morning and afternoon hours between August 25 and 28.

The weather activity is expected to increase slightly from August 29 to 31, when light to moderate rain and thundershowers may occur at scattered to many places, with brief intense showers possible during the early morning and afternoon hours.

The MeT said hot and humid conditions are likely to continue from September 1 to 2, with brief spells of rain or thundershowers at scattered places. Between September 3 and 5, similar weather is expected, though rainfall activity is likely to remain confined to isolated places. [More on P6](#)

CM announces phased upgrade of 714 High Schools into K-12

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Aug 24: The Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Omar Abdullah on Monday rolled out a phased plan to upgrade 714 High Schools into full-fledged K-12 composite institutions.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the decision was taken in a review meeting on Monday chaired by CM Omar Abdullah.

K-12 education refers to the system of public and private primary and secondary schooling that spans from Kindergarten (K) through the 12th Grade (12).

Taking to the microblogging



site X, Office of Chief Minister, J&K posted, "Chief Minister chaired a review meeting of the School Education Department at Civil Secretariat, Srinagar."

It said that the meeting focused on improving the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the

higher secondary level.

The meeting also reviewed the phased plan to upgrade 714 High Schools into K-12 composite schools, including requirements for teaching and non-teaching staff, infrastructure, laboratories [More on P6](#)

KISHTWAR SCHOOLGIRL INCIDENT

Omar directs SED to complete inquiry within month

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Aug 24: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday directed the School Education Department to complete its inquiry into the heinous incident in Kishtwar involving a young schoolgirl on an expeditious basis, so that stringent and exemplary action can be ensured in the matter.

The Chief Minister directed the concerned authorities to complete the inquiry within one month and take all necessary steps to bring the investigation to its logical conclusion.

He stressed the need for a thorough and time-bound inquiry, underscoring that [More on P6](#)

High-density apples fetch Rs 150-200/kg, growers report better returns

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Aug 24: High-density apple cultivation is gradually transforming the traditional horticulture landscape of Kashmir, with growers reporting higher productivity, improved fruit quality and better returns compared to conventional orchard systems, as prices of high-density apples have touched nearly Rs 200 per kilogram in some markets this season.

Growers from Pulwama and Shopian said modern plantations have enabled them to

make better use of limited land while reducing the waiting period for substantial returns.

Mohammad Ashraf Bhat, a grower from Pulwama said that traditional apple trees require considerable space and take several years before reaching full production capacity, whereas in high-density orchards plants are smaller, fruiting begins earlier and productivity is much higher, making the difference in returns clearly visible when quality apples fetch Rs 150 to Rs 200 per kilogram. He added that orchard management is

also comparatively easier in modern plantations, as pruning, spraying and harvesting can be carried out more systematically because the trees are smaller and arranged in an organised manner.

Mohammad Yousuf Reshie, a grower from Shopian, said high-density plantations could prove particularly beneficial for farmers with small landholdings, as they allow many more plants to be grown on the same piece of land, giving small farmers an opportunity to produce a sizeable quantity of fruit. "The advantage



becomes more evident during marketing, as high-density

orchards can produce a higher volume of commercially

desirable fruit, and if the market remains favourable, growers can earn significantly better returns," he said.

The Jammu and Kashmir government has been encouraging the transition towards high-density horticulture as part of efforts to increase productivity, modernise the apple industry and improve farmers' incomes. It has been extending support towards planting material, infrastructure and other components required for establishing high-density plantations to reduce the initial financial burden on farmers.

Officials and horticulture experts have stressed that government assistance, coupled with proper technical guidance, can help growers adopt modern systems while improving overall productivity.

However, growers acknowledge that high-density cultivation requires greater investment and more intensive management during the initial stages.

Bhat said farmers need proper rootstock, irrigation, pruning, fertigation and disease management, and without scientific management the expected returns [More on P6](#)

Div Com Kashmir reviews development proposals for heritage sites in Budgam, Pulwama

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 24: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, Monday chaired a meeting to review proposals for the development, renovation and upgradation of heritage sites including Asar-i-Sharief Peth Makhama Budgam and Khoo Sahb Yarwan Shadimarg, Pulwama.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by the Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Director Archives, Archaeology and Museums, Superintending Engineer PWD South Kashmir, Tehsildar Waqf Board, officers from Budgam district and representatives of the District Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, Pulwama.

During the meeting, members of the Prabandhak Committee submitted a detailed proposal for the development and renovation of the Holy Spring at Khoo Sahb Yarwan. They sought inclusion of several components in the Detailed Project Report (DPR), including construction of Nisahan Sahib, development of the Holy

Spring, a langar room, glass room, cottage rooms, footpath and fencing.

Taking note of the demands, the Divisional Commissioner directed the Superintending Engineer, PWD South Kashmir, to incorporate the requirements in the proposal and conduct a site visit in coordination with the concerned district administration. He also stressed the need to involve community representatives during the process to ensure that their requirements are appropriately reflected in the development plan.

Regarding Asar-i-Sharief Peth Makhama, the Divisional Commissioner directed the Tehsildar, Waqf Board, to engage with local community members, assess the requirements of the proposed project and examine the feasibility of facade development and renovation of the shrine.

The Divisional Commissioner emphasized coordinated efforts among the concerned departments and stakeholders for the timely and effective development of both religious and heritage sites.



DC Srinagar reviews arrangements for Raksha Bandhan Festival

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR AUGUST 24: To review and finalize arrangements for the upcoming festival of Raksha Bandhan, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo Monday chaired a meeting of senior Officers at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex.

The festival is scheduled to be celebrated on August 28, 2026, with great religious and cultural significance.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz, Additional Deputy Commissioner Aadil Fareed, Joint Commissioner SMC Nuzhat Qureshi, IAS Probationer Aakash Garg, SP Headquarters Umar Shah, SP Traffic Zaheer Abbas, Chief Planning Officer Fayaz Ahmad Dar, SDM East Zubair Ahmad, Executive Engineer KPDCL Syed Abrar, Executive Engineer PHE Aijaz Rafiq, Tehsildar South Sajad Rasool Shah, District Health Officer Dr Rubeena



requirements.

The DC directed all concerned Departments to ensure that all essential arrangements are put in place well in advance for the devotees expected to visit the Shankaracharya Temple.

Emphasizing the importance of close inter-departmental coordination, the DC called for a coordinated approach to ensure that devotees are provided a safe, smooth and hassle-free experience throughout the celebrations.

Regarding, the traffic management, the DC directed the concerned agencies to ensure smooth vehicular movement and adequate transportation and parking facilities at designated locations. He further asked the ARTO to facilitate shuttle services from Nehru Park to Shankaracharya Temple for the convenience of devotees.

The DC stressed the need for an uninterrupted supply of electricity and drinking water at the venue to ensure that devotees do not face any inconvenience.

DC Kulgam chairs meeting of SDRF to review hailstorm damages

KT News Desk

KULGAM, AUGUST 24: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, Monday chaired a district level meeting of State Disaster Relief Force (SDRF) to review the damages caused due to hailstorms across the district.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, undertook a detailed review of the villages affected by the recent hail storms in the district and took stock of the relief measures extended to the affected farmers.

He directed the concerned officers to ensure that the final assessment of damages is carried out in a time-bound and transparent manner, and that admissible relief is disbursed to the affected beneficiaries without delay.

The meeting also deliberated upon the provision of Anti-Hail Nets as a preventive measure to safeguard horticulture produce from future hailstorm-related losses. The DC directed the Agriculture and Horticulture Departments to identify vulnerable orchard belts and explore convergence with available schemes for wider coverage of Anti-Hail Nets across the district.

The DC further asked all concerned officers to remain proactive in disaster preparedness and to submit accurate and expeditious reports so that affected people get timely relief under SDRF norms.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kulgam, Viqar Ahmed Giri, Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) Reyaz Ahmad Shah, Tehsildar, Kulgam Nisar Ahmad Wani, Tehsildar DH Pora, Zahid Gani, Chief Horticulture Officer, Mohd Ramzan War, and other officers and officials.

DC Shopian chairs District-Level NCORD meeting



KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, AUGUST 24: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta, Monday chaired a District-Level Narcotics Coordination (NCORD) Committee meeting at the Mini-Secretariat, Shopian, to review and strengthen coordinated efforts to combat the drug menace in the district.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Shopian, Mushtaq Ahmed Choudhary; ADC, Dr. Zakir Husain Faaz; ACR, Shakoor Ahmed Dar; SDM Zainapora, Bilal Ahmed; ACD, Muzaffar Ahmed; and senior officers from various departments, including Health, Education, Social Welfare, Agriculture, Horticulture, Transport, Excise & Taxation, besides representatives of concerned enforcement agencies.

During the meeting,

threadbare discussions were held on issues pertaining to narcotics control, prevention, enforcement and inter-departmental coordination. The participating officers shared updates and inputs from their respective departments and deliberated on measures to further strengthen the collective response against drug abuse.

The DC stressed the need for close coordination among all stakeholders, effective enforcement and sustained awareness among youth and the general public to prevent drug abuse and safeguard the younger generation from the harmful consequences of substance abuse.

He directed all concerned departments and enforcement agencies to maintain close coordination and ensure timely follow-up and implementation of decisions taken during NCORD meetings.

The DC further directed SDM Zainapora to convene awareness meetings in the concerned areas to sensitise farmers and the general public against the cultivation of poppy and make them aware that such illegal cultivation invites strict legal action under law.

He also directed the Chief Education Officer (CEO) to ensure that all educational institutions remain clean, safe and drug-free, besides maintaining strict vigilance to prevent any substance-abuse-related activity.

Government of Jammu and Kashmir OFFICE OF THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OFFICER POSHAN PROJECT BIJBEHARA

RE-ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE NO- 09 OF 2026
Dated: 24.08.2026

Subject: Re-advertisement Notice for Post of Sahayika (AWH) in Anganwadi Centre Poshan Project Bijbehara

Reference:-1. Government Order No: 222-JK(SWD) of 2022 Dated: 30.11.2022.
2. Government Order No: 103-JK(SWD) of 2023 Dated: 28.04.2023.
3. SMD/ICDS/Recruitment/2022-23/6235-38 Dated: 21.02.2024.

Applications on prescribed proforma (Annexure-I) are hereby invited from the eligible female candidates of the Panch wards/Municipal Wards shown against the below mentioned Panchayat Halqas/Municipal Wards, for the engagement of Sahayikas (AWH)"preferably married" for the Anganwadi Centres of POSHAN Project Bijbehara on "Honorarium basis". The applications along with required documents shall be deposited in the Office of the undersigned i.e Child Development Project Officer Bijbehara by or before 08.09. 2026 against the proper receipt.

S.NO	NAME OF THE DISTRICT	NAME OF THE PROJECT	NAME OF PANCHAYAT/ MUNICIPALITY WARD	VACANCY OF SAHAYIKAS (ANGANWADI HELPERS)	
				NO. OF PANCH WARD/ MC WARD	NAME OF AWC
01			Hatigam	Ward 08	Darigund "B"

Criteria for Selection of Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helpers) shall remain as envisaged in the Govt Order No: 103 JK (SWD) OF 2023 Dated 28.4.2023 i.e.

- ❖ Women candidates in the age group of 18-37 years as on 01-01-2026 shall be considered for the post.
- ❖ The candidate should be a domicile of the UT of J&K.
- ❖ The candidate should be a resident of the Electoral Ward where Anganwadi Centre is located.
- ❖ Minimum qualification for Anganwadi Helper shall be Matriculation.
- ❖ In case no matriculate candidate is available in the Panch Ward/MC Ward, candidates with qualification not less than 8th standard shall be considered.
- ❖ The committee shall select the most destitute/needly married women of the Panch ward/MC Ward as helper from amongst those who fulfill the qualification criteria. In case no married candidate is available, unmarried candidate can also be considered.
- ❖ Self-attested copies of documents to be attached with the application form:-
 - ❖ Panch Ward /MC Ward Certificate/ Present /continuous, Ward residence certificate issued by BDO/Executive Officer which ever applicable duly countersigned by ACR/SDM.
 - ❖ Domicile Certificate issued by Tehsildar concerned.
 - ❖ Date of Birth Certificate.
 - ❖ Academic Qualification Certificates with Marks card of 10th.
 - ❖ Non employment Certificate from a Gazetted Officer.
 - ❖ Self-Addressed envelope with postage stamp of Rs 5/-.

Note: Prescribed Application Proforma can be had from the undersigned office "Free of Cost".

CHILD DEV. PROJECT OFFICER
POSHAN BIJBEHARA

No:-CDPO/POSHAN/Adv/2026-27/432-46

Dated: - 24 -08-2026

(ANNEXURE-I)

S.NO: APPLICATION FORM FOR ENGAGEMENT OF SAHAYIKA (ANGANWADI HELPER)

- Name of the District: - Anantnag
- Name of the ICDS Project - Bijbehara
- Name of the Anganwadi Centre for which engagement sought.....
- Panch Ward/MC Ward..... Panchayat Halqa.....
- Name of the Candidate (In Block Letters)
- Fathers Name (In Block Letters)
- Marital Status: - Married /Un Married
- Husband's Name (if married)
- Place of Permanent Residence.....
- Mohalla..... Village.....
- Panch Ward Constituency.....
- Name of the Panchayat Halqa.....
- House No..... (As per latest Panchayat Ward Electoral)
- Block.....
- Address for Correspondence..... Mobile No:.....
- Date of Birth.....

D	D	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y

Age as on 01-01-2026.....

11. Academic Qualification

S.No	Examination passed	Board/School	Year of passing	Marks Obt.	Max. Marks	%age
1	Matric					
2	T.D.C					
2	Graduation					

14. Do candidate belong to family of retired AWH (Yes/No).

15. Documents attached.

- ❖ Panch Ward Certificate/ Present /continuous, Ward residence certificate issued by BDO duly countersigned by ACR/SDM
- ❖ Panchayat Electoral Roll duly attested by concerned officer/official.
- ❖ Domicile Certificate issued by Tehsildar concerned.
- ❖ Assembly intikhabi first issued by Assistant Election officer.
- ❖ Date of Birth Certificate.
- ❖ Academic Qualification Certificates with Marks card of 10th,12th
- ❖ If candidate belong to family of retired AWH then copy of the e-ration card/any other proof.

UNDERTAKING

I.....D/o/W/o.....R/o.....

do hereby certify that the contents of the application given above are correct and true to the best of my knowledge. In case any of the above contents is found incorrect, the selection committee shall have the right to reject my application and similarly revoke my engagement order.

DIPK-4941/26
DATED: 24-08-2026

Signature of Candidate

Signature of Candidate

Photograph of the applicant duly attested by Gazetted Officer

DC Baramulla reviews arrangements at major Shrines ahead of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW)

KT News Desk

BARAMULLA, AUGUST 24: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Dr. S.F. Hamid, accompanied by the Additional Deputy Commissioner and officers of various line departments, Monday visited Hazrat Syed Janbaz Wali (RA) Shrine and Dargah-e-Aliya Shere Khaas, Baramulla, to review the arrangements being put in place ahead of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW), when a large number of devotees are expected to visit the shrines.

During the visit, the DC, as per an official statement, took a detailed assessment of the arrangements concerning sanitation, street lights, drinking water, uninterrupted power supply, road connectivity and other essential facilities required for the convenience of devotees.

The management committees apprised the DC of various requirements and highlighted the need for adequate fencing, streetlights and improved sanitation in and around the shrine premises, besides proper cleanliness along the approach roads.

Taking immediate note of the issues raised, the DC directed the Additional Deputy Commissioner Baramulla to ensure immediate installation of streetlights at the identified locations.



He also directed the Executive Officer, Municipal Council Baramulla, to ensure thorough sanitation and cleanliness in and around both shrines, including the roads and approach routes leading to the religious sites.

The DC further directed the concerned authorities to ensure uninterrupted power supply at the shrines and along the routes used by devotees. He stressed that all essential services should remain functional throughout the period of the religious observance, particularly during evening and night hours.

At Hazrat Syed Janbaz Wali (RA) Shrine, the Deputy Commissioner also inspected the ongoing works for upgradation of facilities and took stock of the progress being made. He enquired about the facilities being developed for devotees and sought details regarding the arrangements to

be made during the ongoing construction process.

The concerned Executive Engineer, R&B Department, apprised the DC about the status of the ongoing works and informed him that necessary arrangements would be ensured to facilitate devotees and minimise inconvenience during their visit to the shrine.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned departments to complete the required arrangements in a time-bound manner and maintain close coordination with the shrine management committees. He emphasized that special attention should be given to cleanliness, sanitation, drinking water, power supply, accessibility and the overall movement of devotees.

The DC also stressed the importance of ensuring that the approach roads and areas surrounding the shrines remain clean, well-lit and accessible, particularly in view of the expected footfall during the occasion.

The DC called for coordinated and proactive efforts by all concerned departments to ensure that devotees are provided with a safe, clean and comfortable environment and that the observance of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW) is facilitated smoothly and peacefully.

CM Omar orders 'focused' action on Srinagar stray dog menace

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Aug 24: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday called for a focused, coordinated and humane response to the growing stray dog menace in Srinagar, directing the concerned departments and Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) to accord the issue top priority and work towards tangible results.

Chairing a review meeting on the issue, the Chief Minister observed that the stray dog menace has emerged as one of the foremost practical concerns for residents of Srinagar, with the issue affecting the daily lives and sense of security of citizens across the city and beyond.

The Chief Minister noted that the progress in addressing the issue in Jammu through better handling of sterilisation coverage needs to be replicated in Kashmir division. He questioned why the relatively better implementation of Animal Birth Control being followed in Jammu has not been implemented efficiently in



Kashmir.

"Within the same territory, we have success of having achieved around 80 per cent sterilisation in Jammu, while Srinagar has not been able to make comparable progress. If we have demonstrated that it can be done in Jammu, we should be able to replicate that success in Srinagar," the Chief Minister said.

Seeking a clear assessment

of the requirements of the concerned departments in terms of veterinary surgeons, paravets and other support staff needed in Kashmir division, Omar Abdullah assured full government support for the resources needed to undertake the work in a sustained manner and directed to immediately engage the requisite staff and take immediate action on ground to address the issue of

dog menace including measures for quick disposal of garbage dumps so that dogs do not thrive on road side piles of food waste. CM exhorted SMC and JMC to deal with garbage disposal within municipal areas in quick time, which is seen as major hazard by the public as giving rise to dog menace and giving an impression of polluted cities.

He directed that a dedicated team be constituted within SMC to address the issue in mission mode, with emphasis on substantially increasing the number of trained dog catchers, scaling up sterilisation operations and strengthening the availability of veterinary doctors and trained personnel. The Chief Minister stressed that the response must be humane and in accordance with established procedures, while remaining focused on effectively controlling the stray dog population and addressing the concerns of citizens.

He called for greater coordination among the Housing & Urban Development Department, Health

and Medical Education Department, SMC and other concerned agencies to ensure that the measures adopted translate into measurable improvement on the ground.

The Chief Minister said the objective should be to develop a sustainable and effective mechanism for addressing the stray dog issue not only in Srinagar but across Jammu and Kashmir.

Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Commissioner Secretary Housing & Urban Development Mandeep Kaur, Commissioner Secretary Health & Medical Education M Raju, Commissioner Secretary Education, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Inspector General of Police Jammu Zone, Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation, Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

Power tariff hike a compulsion, not a choice: MP Choudhary Ramzan



Waris Fayaz

Handwara, Aug 24: National Conference (NC) Rajya Sabha Member Choudhary Ramzan on Monday defended the government's decision to increase electricity tariffs by 6.83 per cent, describing the hike as a "compulsion" rather than a choice.

Speaking to reporters in Handwara, Ramzan said, "We don't want people to suffer, but it is a compulsion. Rates of other essentials are also touching the skies. The power tariff hike is a compulsion, otherwise we will have to stop giving electricity," he said.

Ramzan urged people to cooperate with the government, saying it had to balance competing demands amid the challenges in governance.

He said the decision was taken even though the government was not ready for the

tariff increase.

RUHULLAH REMAINS INTEGRAL PART OF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

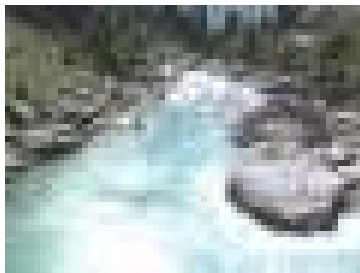
On the issue surrounding NC leader Aga Ruhullah Mehdi, Ramzan said NC president an integral part of the National Conference and there is no issue between him and the party leadership.

"Aga Ruhullah is part of the ruling National Conference. He was and is part of us," he said. Ramzan said NC president Dr Farooq Abdullah had earlier described Ruhullah as being like his son, while Ruhullah had also referred to Abdullah as a fatherly figure.

"Where is the issue?" he asked, accusing the media of blowing the matter out of proportion.

"Media should stop exaggerating the issue. They have already done enough," Ramzan said—(KNO)

Ganderbal Admin issues advisory against bathing in Nallah Sindh



Raja Syed Rather

Ganderbal, Aug 24: In view of the risks associated with bathing and swimming in Nallah Sindh and other water bodies, the District Administration Ganderbal has issued a public advisory urging people, particularly parents and guardians, to exercise utmost caution and remain vigilant.

The advisory calls upon parents and guardians to strictly prevent children from entering or bathing in Nallah Sindh and other water bodies and to keep them under close supervision, especially during holidays and leisure hours.

The administration has further advised parents to educate children about the dangers posed by deep, fast-flowing and unpredictable water bodies and discourage them from swimming or bathing at unprotected and unsafe locations.

Children should not go near water bodies without responsible adult supervision, it stressed.

The advisory was issued by the Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Ganderbal, on August 24, 2026, amid safety concerns associated with water bodies across the district—(KNO)

Batangoo residents urge restoration of door-to-door garbage collection



Jahangeer Ganaie

Anantnag, Aug 24: Residents of Batangoo in south Kashmir's Anantnag district have urged the authorities to immediately restore door-to-door garbage collection, claiming that the service has remained disrupted for the past two to three months.

Residents said that the prolonged absence of a regular waste collection mechanism has resulted in the accumulation of household garbage along roadsides, lanes, public pathways and other open spaces, creating unhygienic conditions and causing considerable inconvenience to people.

They said the situation has also led to a foul smell in

several areas, while the accumulation of waste has attracted stray dogs and other animals, raising concerns about sanitation and public health.

A particularly worrying aspect of the situation, residents said, is the increasing use of a local canal as a dumping site. They alleged that some people have started throwing household garbage and plastic waste into the water channel in the absence of a regular collection system.

"The door-to-door collection service has not been functioning for the last two to three months. As a result, garbage is piling up in residential areas, and people are being forced to look for alternative ways to dispose of it," a resident said.

Another resident said the canal, which should serve as a water channel, was gradually turning into a dumping ground.

"People are throwing polythene, plastic and household waste into the canal. This is not only damaging the surroundings but could also affect the flow and quality of water. The authorities need to intervene before the situation becomes worse," the resident said.

Residents said the problem was particularly concerning in densely populated areas, where accumulated waste remains exposed for days and is vulnerable to being scattered by wind or animals.

"During summer, the smell becomes unbearable. Children and elderly people have to pass

through these areas every day. We are not asking for anything extraordinary; we only want the basic waste collection service to function regularly," another local said.

The residents appealed to people to refrain from dumping garbage into the canal and other public places, saying that civic responsibility and an efficient collection mechanism were both necessary to address the problem.

Residents of Batangoo said the situation on the ground required immediate attention and sought restoration of regular door-to-door collection in their areas.

They asked the concerned department and local administration to deploy waste collection vehicles immediately, clear the accumulated garbage from roads and public spaces, and ensure regular monitoring to prevent further pollution of the canal.

"We appeal to the authorities to treat this as an urgent public issue. The garbage should be lifted immediately, and a permanent collection schedule should be put in place so that the problem does not recur," residents said.

They also called for strict action against indiscriminate dumping in the canal and other public places, along with awareness measures to encourage residents to follow proper waste disposal practices.

The residents said a clean and scientifically managed waste disposal system was essential for protecting the environment, maintaining public hygiene and preventing the spread of sanitation-related problems in the area—(KNO)

Court orders inquiry into Tehsildar Sopore's unauthorised beacon, siren use

KNO

Srinagar, Aug 24: The Special Mobile Magistrate (Traffic), Kashmir Province, Srinagar has directed the SSP Traffic Rural Kashmir to physically inspect the official vehicle of Tehsildar Sopore Tariq Ahmad Shiekh following allegations of unauthorised use of a red or blue beacon light and multi-toned siren.

The order, accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), was passed on an application filed by Muzaffar Ahmad, who alleged that the Tehsildar was using a beacon or warning light and multi-toned siren on his official vehicle in violation of the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, and SRO 55 of 2014 applicable to Jammu and Kashmir. The applicant placed screenshots and a link to a Facebook video before the court, reportedly showing the Tehsildar giving a roadside media interview from his official vehicle, with a beacon or warning light allegedly affixed to the vehicle. The court, after examining the application and material placed on record, said a prima facie case had been made out warranting an inquiry into whether the vehicle was fitted with an unauthorised beacon light or multi-toned siren.

The court directed the SSP Traffic Rural Kashmir to inspect the vehicle and

ascertain whether it carries a red or blue beacon light and/or multi-toned siren and whether their use is covered by any valid legal authorisation.

It further directed that if an unauthorised beacon or multi-toned siren is found, the inspecting authority shall remove or seize it and initiate action against the vehicle and the person responsible for its use under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, SRO 55 of 2014 and the Supreme Court judgment in Abhay Singh v. State of Uttar Pradesh.

The SSP Traffic Rural Kashmir has also been directed to submit a compliance and inspection report, along with photographs of the vehicle and details of the inspection outcome, within two weeks of receiving the order.

The court directed Tehsildar Tariq Ahmad Shiekh to appear before it, either personally or through counsel, on the next date of hearing and show cause why appropriate proceedings should not be initiated against him over the alleged unauthorised use of the red beacon or warning light and multi-toned siren.

The matter has been listed for September 10, 2026, for filing of the compliance report and appearance of the Tehsildar—(KNO)

‘91 pc teachers want AI literacy taught at every level; only 13 pc schools AI ready’

PTI

New Delhi, Aug 24: Only 13 per cent schools in India have achieved advanced, system-wide integration of artificial intelligence and 91 per cent teachers believe it is necessary for schools to establish clear parameters defining boundaries for use of AI by students in academic work, according to a new report by QS I-GAUGE.

QS I-GAUGE is an independent education-rating system that brings together the global experience and expertise of London-based QS Quacquarelli Symonds and the knowledge of Indian educational luminaries.

According to another QS I-GAUGE report on AI adoption in higher education, four in five faculty members say their institutions are ready but 78 per cent fear overuse will weaken students' independent thinking and problem-solving.

The voluntary surveys drew responses from 1,209 teachers from 71 K-12 institutions across 21 states and Union Territories, and 1,118

faculty responses from 146 higher education institutions across 27 states and UTs. Together, the reports examine institutional readiness, teacher capacity, governance, classroom use and concerns about integrity, privacy and excessive dependence on automation.

"Among schoolteachers, 88 per cent said their leadership regarded AI as vital to future-ready education and 86 per cent said their schools were prepared to offer structured professional development.

"Yet institutional readiness remained uneven: 25 per cent each were at the structured-implementation and exploration stages, 15 per cent at awareness, 14 per cent at partial implementation, 5 per cent at pilot stage and 3 per cent reported no readiness," the school education report said.

While 91 per cent school teachers wanted defined boundaries for student use, faculty-use protocols, cyber safety and academic-integrity frameworks were among the top identified priorities. Parents' leading



concerns, as reported by teachers, were data privacy and cognitive dependence, both at 77 per cent, followed by increased screen time at 76 per cent.

"Assessment of institutional readiness reveals a fragmented landscape with only 25

per cent schools having initiated structured AI implementation, 25 per cent remaining in an exploratory phase and only 13 per cent achieving advanced system wide-integration," the report said.

In colleges and universities, 83 per cent of faculty said AI could make administrative work more efficient and 76 per cent expected it to improve academic performance.

"Seventy-eight of the faculty are concerned that relying too heavily on AI tools will reduce students' independent thinking and problem-solving skills. Seventy-six per cent of the faculty believe that using AI will boost students' overall academic performance and create a more productive learning experience.

"To successfully adopt AI, the top two institutional resources requested by faculty are hands-on training workshops (cited by 71 per cent of respondents) and access to premium, enterprise-level AI tools (cited by 61 per cent). When asked about their student-focused concerns regarding AI, the two issues most

frequently selected by faculty were academic dishonesty (72 per cent) and students becoming excessively dependent on AI to complete their work (63 per cent)," the higher education report said.

According to QS India chair Ashwin Fernandes, the goal should be "not simply greater AI adoption, but responsible AI capability", combining innovation with inclusion, academic integrity and human judgement.

"India's emerging AI vision reflects a broader ambition to become not simply a consumer of AI, but a creator of technology, talent and solutions that can contribute globally. The goal should not simply be greater AI adoption, but responsible AI capability. The institutions that lead will be those that combine innovation with inclusion, academic integrity and human judgement," said Dr Ashwin Fernandes, chair, QS India, and vice president, Strategic and International Engagement, QS Quacquarelli Symonds.

EDITORIAL

India’s Japan Outreach A Strategic Leap

India sending its largest-ever business delegation to Japan—more than 200 representatives across semiconductors, clean energy, automotive, healthcare, and start-ups—is a strategic statement of intent. The visit of Union Minister Piyush Goyal to Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka comes at a time when global supply chains are being reimagined, and nations are scrambling to secure reliable partners. Japan, with its technological prowess and

industrial discipline, has long been one of India's most trusted allies. This visit aims to transform that trust into tangible economic outcomes. The sectors on the agenda are not random. Semiconductors and artificial intelligence are the building blocks of the future. Manufacturing and clean energy are essential for a self-reliant India. Automotive and steel are the backbone of industrial growth. By engaging with Japanese conglomerates, financial

institutions, and policymakers across these sectors, India is signalling that it is open for business and ready to compete at the highest level. The choice of venues is equally significant. Tokyo, the political and financial nerve centre, will host high-level policy discussions. Nagoya, Japan's industrial heartland, will focus on manufacturing and automotive partnerships. Osaka, a hub for electronics and consumer industries, will showcase India's

growing consumer market. This three-city approach demonstrates a deep understanding of Japan's economic geography. The visit also sends a clear message to the world: India is not just a market to be served but a partner to be built with. The focus on high-technology manufacturing and next-generation industries aligns perfectly with India's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat @2047. It is a vision that requires not just

domestic effort but also global collaboration. The government deserves appreciation for its sustained engagement with Japan, one of India's most consistent and reliable partners. This visit will likely give fresh momentum to bilateral trade and investment ties, opening new avenues for cooperation that will benefit both nations for decades to come. In a world of uncertainty, such strategic partnerships are not just desirable; they are essential.

Rebuilding Farming Systems: Regenerative Agriculture For A Resilient India

Press Information Bureau

India's farms have sustained agricultural growth, but long-term productivity depends on healthy soils and resilient ecosystems. Regenerative agriculture offers a pathway to restore soil vitality, improve biodiversity, and strengthen resilience against climate stresses. Across the country, farmers are adopting practices such as natural farming, agroforestry, micro-irrigation, integrated farming systems, and scientific soil management. Government support has accelerated this transition. As of March 2026, natural farming clusters covered 8.80 lakh hectares and enrolled 18.19 lakh farmers. About 109 lakh hectares have been brought under Per Drop More Crop as of May 2026. In addition, 25.89 crore Soil Health Cards have been generated since inception, as of March 2026. These efforts are helping build a more productive, resource-efficient, and environmentally responsible future for Indian agriculture.

The Imperative for Regenerative Agriculture India's agriculture and allied sectors have demonstrated strong and sustained progress. During FY16-FY25, it recorded decadal growth of 4.45 percent, the highest in previous decades. This achievement reflects the resilience of the sector and the continued efforts of farmers across the country. Yet, sustaining this momentum requires strengthening the ecological foundations that support long-term agricultural productivity.

Each season, farmers return to the same fields with renewed hope and growing responsibility. Years of intensive cultivation, heavy chemical use, and erratic rainfall leave many soils tired and less responsive. Yields that once came easily now demand higher inputs, while heatwaves, dry spells, or excess rain can undo months of labour. For millions of small and marginal farmers, declining soil health often translates into higher costs and uncertain harvests. As a result, the sustainability of farming has become an increasingly important concern.

This is where Regenerative Agriculture finds its relevance. By rebuilding soil vitality, strengthening ecosystem functions, and improving resilience to climatic variability, it addresses both soil and productivity challenges. More importantly, it offers a pathway to revive India's agricultural foundations while supporting long-term environmental balance and farm prosperity.

Understanding the Regenerative Agriculture Approach

Regenerative agriculture is a holistic farming approach centred on restoring soil health and enhancing biodiversity. At the same time, it seeks to ensure long-term productivity and resilience in farming systems. Healthy soils support higher food and nutritional output, store more carbon, and promote biodiversity. Unlike sustainable farming, which primarily aims to maintain existing conditions, regenerative agriculture seeks to improve them. It goes a step further by actively rebuilding soil health, enhancing biodiversity, and strengthening ecosystem resilience.

It is based on the following principles:

- Minimizing soil disturbance
- Protecting the living roots of perennial crops
- Maintaining soil cover
- Integrating Livestock
- Limiting the use of chemical inputs
- Enhancing biodiversity

In essence, Regenerative agriculture offers a practical and forward-looking pathway for the future of farming by restoring the natural foundations of agriculture.

Strengthening Agricultural Resilience through Regenerative Approaches

Regenerative agriculture draws upon a diverse set of farming practices adopted in India. While the spectrum of regenerative approaches is much broader, some of the prominent practices can be broadly classified into the following categories:

Water and Resource Efficiency

Micro-irrigation systems such as drippers, sprinklers, and foggers deliver water directly to plant roots. This reduces water wastage and improves water-use efficiency. By optimizing farm-level water management, these systems enhance crop productivity and strengthen resilience to droughts and water stress. As a result, farming systems become more climate-resilient and economically viable.

Farm Mechanization involves the use of



agricultural machinery and equipment to streamline and automate various farm operations. It helps optimize the use of key inputs such as water, fuel, and fertilizers, reducing wastage and lowering the carbon footprint. By enabling timely and precise farm operations, mechanization improves resource management, enhances productivity, and helps reduce the environmental impact of farming.

Soil and Nutrient Management

Nitrogen Fertilizer Management helps reduce nitrous oxide emissions while improving crop productivity. It focuses on selecting the right fertilizer and optimizing application timing and dosage. Other practices include deep placement of supergranular urea and the use of leaf color charts for precise assessment of nitrogen status. The approach also promotes biological inputs such as cyanobacteria and legume intercropping. Overall, these measures improve nitrogen-use efficiency and minimize environmental losses.

Natural farming is a chemical-free agricultural approach rooted in India's traditional knowledge systems. The system relies on on-farm biological inputs such as Beejamrut, Jeevamrut, Ghanjeevamrut, Neemastra, and Dashpami, prepared using inputs from native livestock. It also promotes the use of traditional seed varieties and the integration of trees along farm boundaries. Pest management is undertaken through locally prepared, on-farm botanical formulations. Practitioners are encouraged to adopt continuous cover cropping, multi-cropping, mulching, and minimal soil disturbance to maintain soil fertility and ecological balance. The integration of livestock with diversified cropping systems further helps improve soil health, restores ecosystems, and reduces input costs for farmers.

Soil Health Management Practices such as green manuring, cover cropping, and mulching play a vital role in regenerative agriculture. Green manuring involves growing and incorporating specific crops into the soil to add organic matter and nutrients. It helps in improving soil fertility, structure, and carbon sequestration. Cover cropping refers to growing crops primarily to cover the soil rather than for harvest. It protects against erosion, maintains soil organic carbon, and supports nutrient cycling. Mulching involves covering the soil surface with organic residues such as leaves, straw, etc. It helps conserve moisture and regulate soil temperature. Mulching also suppresses weeds, promotes beneficial microbial activity, and improves crop productivity.

Integrated and Climate-Resilient Farming Systems

Integrated Farming Systems (IFS) is a holistic agricultural approach that combines

multiple farm enterprises into a single system. It integrates crops, livestock, fisheries, and allied activities such as horticulture, agroforestry, and apiculture. The approach promotes practices such as intercropping, crop rotation, multi-cropping, and mixed farming that maximize resource use. This also reduces the risk of crop failure, diversifies livelihood opportunities, and enhances resilience to climate extremes such as floods and droughts.

Agroforestry integrates perennial tree systems with fruit and plantation crops to create a more sustainable and profitable farming system. It helps farmers earn additional income while improving soil moisture, regulating local temperatures, and storing more carbon.

In rainfed regions, agroforestry plays a crucial role in rejuvenating degraded land. These systems help mitigate the impacts of unpredictable rainfall, enhance agricultural resilience, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions over time.

Climate-Resilient Agriculture (CRA) encompasses a plethora of strategies and technologies to fortify agricultural systems against a changing climate. Its key components include: balanced use of nutrients and fertilizers, effective pest management, efficient and judicious use of water, conservation of soil moisture at the field level, and appropriate land preparation practices that safeguard soil health and enhance crop performance.

In addition, CRA includes innovations such as water-sharing groups, seed and fodder systems, community nurseries, and collective marketing mechanisms. Together, these practices and innovations strengthen agricultural systems, enabling them to better withstand climate-related stresses and shocks.

The Multifaceted Benefits of Regenerative Farming

Regenerative agriculture offers a wide range of environmental, economic, and social benefits, supporting both healthy ecosystems and resilient farming.

Environmental Outcomes

Soil restoration: Regenerative practices rebuild soil organic matter, improve soil structure, and enhance long-term soil fertility, supporting stable agricultural productivity.

Biodiversity enhancement: Regenerative approaches create favourable conditions for a wide variety of species, including pollinators, beneficial insects, and soil microorganisms. This helps in strengthening overall ecosystem balance.

Climate change mitigation: These systems absorb and store more carbon than they emit, helping reverse agricultural emissions.

Water efficiency: Healthier soils improve water retention and reduce runoff. This limits

soil erosion and the flow of sediments and pollutants into rivers and lakes, helping protect water bodies.

Economic and Social Outcomes

Profitability: Healthier soils reduce dependence on synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and irrigation. This lowers input costs, stabilizes yields, and enhances farmers' net incomes.

Employment generation: Regenerative agriculture creates new livelihood opportunities across farming, advisory services, technology, and ecological management.

Greater resilience: Farms adopting regenerative practices are better equipped to withstand climate variability and market fluctuations.

Advancing Sustainable Development Through Regenerative Agriculture

Regenerative agriculture is closely aligned with SDG 13 (Climate Action). Target 13.1 focuses on strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related risks and natural disasters. Since regenerative practices help reverse greenhouse gas emissions, they contribute to reducing climate-related risks at the farm level. Consequently, they help in enhancing farm-level climate resilience and strengthening adaptive capacity in the face of increasing climate variability.

Promoting Regenerative Agriculture through Targeted Interventions

The government is implementing a wide range of schemes to promote regenerative agricultural practices. Some of the key initiatives support natural and organic farming, agroforestry, micro-irrigation, integrated farming systems, and scientific soil health management.

National Mission on Natural Farming

The National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF), launched in 2024, creates a favourable support ecosystem to help farmers progressively transition to natural farming. The scheme provides an output-based incentive of 4,000 per acre per year for two years, covering up to one acre per farmer. In order to support farmers with easy access to bio-inputs such as Jeevamrit and Beejamrit, the mission provides for 10,000 need-based Bio-input Resource Centres. It also envisages the formation of natural farming clusters. Each cluster is supported by two Community Resource Persons (CRPs) to guide farmers in natural farming practices.

As of 05 March 2026, 18,786 clusters have been formed across the country. These clusters cover 8.80 lakh hectares, and 18.19 lakh farmers have been enrolled to promote Natural Farming. Additionally, 33,676 CRPs have been trained at Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs)/ Agricultural Universities (AUs)/ local natural farming institutions.

Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana

Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), launched in 2015, has emerged as a key pillar of India's organic farming initiative. It provides farmers with an organized framework for adopting eco-friendly practices, obtaining organic certification, and accessing markets that reward sustainable production. Under the scheme, farmers adopting organic farming are supported with 31,500 per hectare over three years.

As of 31 October 2025, a total area of 16.90 lakh ha has been covered under PKVY since its inception.

Per Drop More Crop

Per Drop More Crop (PDMC) is being implemented across the country since 2015-16. It helps improve on-farm water use efficiency through micro-irrigation systems, specifically drip and sprinkler irrigation. Drip irrigation delivers water directly to plant roots through pipes and emitters, reducing water wastage. Sprinkler irrigation sprays water onto the field through pipes and nozzles, ensuring uniform coverage.

Under PDMC, the Government provides 55% financial assistance to small and marginal farmers and 45% to other farmers for installing these systems. In addition, some states provide top-up subsidies to farmers from their own budgets.

Implemented since 2015-16, the scheme has covered about 109 lakh hectares as of May 2026. A total of 26,325 crore in central assistance has been released, significantly improving water-use efficiency.

Rainfed Area Development Programme

The Rainfed Area Development Programme (RAD), being implemented since 2014-15, promotes Integrated Farming Systems (IFS)

through an area-based cluster approach. The programme encourages practices such as multi-cropping, crop rotation, inter-cropping, and mixed cropping. These are integrated with allied activities, including horticulture, livestock, fisheries, and apiculture, to enhance farm income, strengthen livelihoods, and build resilience to climate extremes.

Under RAD, clusters of about 20 hectares are developed within one or more adjoining villages. This approach promotes convergence, encourages community participation, and supports wider replication of successful models. Farmers are supported with financial assistance of 30,000 per family for adopting IFS. An additional 10,000 per cluster is provided for training and capacity-building activities.

Since its inception, 2251.98 crore has been provided as Central Assistance to States for adopting IFS. The scheme covered 9.53 lakh hectares and benefitted 15.73 lakh farmers (as of December 2025).

Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) further support the programme through demonstrations and training on location-specific IFS models. During 2024-25, KVKs conducted 4,416 demonstrations and trained 96,013 farmers on different IFS models.

In FY 2025-26, an allocation of 343.86 crore was made to States/UTs for the implementation of RAD, under which 96,013 farmers received training.

Sub-Mission on Agroforestry

The erstwhile Sub-Mission on Agroforestry (SMAF) was restructured as the Agroforestry Component under the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (PM-RKVY) from 2023-24. It supports the establishment of agroforestry nurseries to provide Quality Planting Material (QPM) to farmers. The scheme component includes: establishment of new nurseries, raising of saplings in existing nurseries, setting up tissue culture units, skill development and awareness, research and development, monitoring and evaluation, specialised technical activities, formulation of projects for the voluntary carbon market in the agriculture sector, and local initiatives.

It provides 100% assistance to Government agencies and 50% back ended credit-linked assistance to private beneficiaries.

During 2025-26, as on 31 October 2025, sanctions amounting to 78.31 crore were issued to 27 States/UTs. A total of 135 new nurseries were established. Sapling production was undertaken in 614 existing nurseries. About 176.59 lakh saplings were raised in these nurseries, benefitting around 25,693 farmers.

Soil Health Card Scheme

Launched in 2015, the Soil Health Card Scheme (SHC) provides farmers with plot-wise soil test reports, generated through scientific testing, for each landholding. The card assesses soil health on 12 key parameters, covering macronutrients, micronutrients, and critical soil properties.

Issued every 2 years, the Soil Health Card helps farmers understand the nutrient status and physicochemical conditions of their soils. It provides crop-specific recommendations on the appropriate use of chemical fertilisers, bio-fertilisers, organic inputs, and soil treatments.

As of 13 March 2026, a total of 25.89 crore Soil Health Cards have been generated since inception. Around 7.17 lakh demonstrations have been conducted to promote balanced fertiliser use. These demonstrations were conducted through advisories supported by the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) and Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs). In addition, 70,002 Krishi Sakhis have been trained to support the dissemination of soil health advisories at the grassroots level.

Growing towards a More Resilient Future

Regenerative agriculture is gradually reshaping the future of Indian farming. It restores soil health while improving resilience and resource efficiency. Practices such as natural farming, agroforestry, micro-irrigation, and integrated farming are contributing to resource-efficient agricultural systems.

Government initiatives are helping farmers adopt these approaches at scale. As more farmers embrace regenerative practices, agriculture can become both environmentally sustainable and economically rewarding. The journey begins with healthier soils and leads towards more resilient farms and secure livelihoods.

The views expressed by contributors on this page are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policies or positions of the newspaper

CS reviews preparedness for phase-I rollout of drug abuse rehabilitation programme

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 24: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Monday chaired a high-level meeting to review the preparedness for implementation of the Phase-I Pilot of the Rehabilitation & Socio-Economic Reintegration Scheme for Drug Abuse Victims, 2026, being coordinated by the Social Welfare Department.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by the Principal Secretary, Home; Commissioner Secretary, H&ME; Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department; DC, Srinagar; Head, IMHANS, Srinagar; Director, Health, Jammu/Kashmir and other concerned officers.

Deputy Commissioners from outside districts along with the Institution heads connected with the meeting through video conferencing.

The meeting reviewed the readiness of the identified pilot institutions and districts, availability of human resources and infrastructure, capacity-building initiatives, inter-departmental coordination and the development of a dedicated digital mechanism for end-to-end monitoring of beneficiaries.

The Phase-I pilot is proposed to be implemented at IMHANS Srinagar, ATFs at Jammu, Kathua, and in Budgam district. The pilot is aimed at testing the rehabilitation model on the ground, identifying operational gaps, refining the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and generating the necessary learning for its subsequent expansion



across the Union Territory.

Taking stock of the preparedness in the pilot districts, the Chief Secretary reviewed the availability of infrastructure and manpower at each location and stressed the need for focused training and capacity-building of Medical Officers, Counsellors, Case Managers, ASHA workers and SHG members so that each stakeholder is adequately equipped to discharge the role assigned under the rehabilitation framework.

The Chief Secretary directed the Social Welfare Department to coordinate the implementation of the programme and ensure its commencement at the earliest. He further directed the Department to simultaneously identify the requisite human resources and infrastructure for extending the rehabilitation mechanism to other districts, so that the pilot exercise facilitates a smooth transition towards wider implementation.

He also sought a first-hand appraisal from the heads of the concerned institutions and the Deputy Commissioners of the

districts where the pilot is being initiated. Emphasising the importance of ground-level coordination, he observed that the success of the programme would depend upon each stakeholder performing the designated role with commitment and ensuring seamless coordination throughout the rehabilitation process.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed the capacity-building initiatives undertaken by IMHANS Srinagar for Medical Officers, Counsellors, Case Managers, SHG members and ASHA workers. He directed IMHANS to continue conducting such training programmes across all districts so as to create a sufficiently large and skilled pool of human resources capable of supporting the rehabilitation programme as it expands.

He further directed the National Informatics Centre (NIC) to complete the Rehabilitation Monitoring Portal without further delay, emphasising that an effective digital monitoring mechanism would be critical for tracking

beneficiaries and ensuring co-ordinated implementation of the programme. The proposed portal envisages confidential, end-to-end digital case management, with each beneficiary assigned a Unique Digital ID (UDIN) and role-based access restricted to authorised officials.

The Chief Secretary stressed the importance of building a trained multidisciplinary human-resource pool capable of undertaking screening, assessment, referral, counselling, family engagement, case management and relapse-risk identification, while maintaining confidentiality and ethical standards in handling beneficiaries.

The Chief Secretary underscored that the Phase-I pilot should serve as a practical model for coordinated rehabilitation and socio-economic reintegration, with effective convergence among the concerned departments, health institutions, district administrations and community-level stakeholders.

Giving a detailed presentation on the pilot, Commissioner

Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Sarmad Hafeez, apprised the meeting of the proposed implementation framework, site-readiness, manpower requirements, capacity-building initiatives and digital monitoring mechanism.

He informed that every pilot location would require suitable medical, counselling and social-work facilities, including doctors' rooms, patient and family counselling spaces, group therapy facilities and referral/emergency linkages. The facilities would also have identified Medical Officers/ Psychiatrists, Counsellors and Social Welfare Officials/Case Managers, besides linkages with community networks including ASHA workers and Self Help Groups. Orientation and training of the concerned personnel would precede beneficiary intake under the pilot.

The meeting further deliberated upon strengthening addiction psychiatry capacity in J&K through proposed collaboration with the National Drug De-addiction & Treatment Centre (NDDTC), AIIMS New Delhi. The proposed collaboration includes structured training, mentoring, observerships and joint research in addiction psychiatry, opioid agonist treatment, dual-diagnosis management and evaluation of rehabilitation interventions.

On this occasion the Head, IMHANS Srinagar, Dr Arshad Hussain, briefed the meeting about the interventions undertaken so far by the Institute and the facilities covered under the pilot. He also highlighted certain areas requiring focused attention at the participating health facilities.

CBC organises awareness programme on VB-G RAM G Act in Leh



KT News Desk

Leh, August 24: A one-day Integrated and Communication and Outreach Programme (ICOP) on the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act (VB-G RAM G) was organized at EJM College, Leh.

The programme, as per PIB statement, was inaugurated by Tufail Iqbal, District Panchayat Officer, Leh, who was also the Chief Guest. Zahoor Hussain, Asst Professor from the Faculty of Social Sciences, EJM college attended the programme as the Guest of Honour.

The programme, which aimed to create awareness about the recently introduced AB-G RAM G Act, was organised by the Leh Field Office of the Central Bureau of Communication, (CBC) a media unit Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. The programme saw enthusiastic participation from students of the college and various schools of Leh district.

Speaking on the occasion, Iqbal congratulated CBC for bringing the schemes of the government to the doorsteps of the citizens. He said that the main objective of programmes like these is to make people aware about how they can benefit from the various steps taken by

the government for their benefit and upliftment. He added that students are the torchbearers when it comes to taking the message of change and development to the masses.

Highlighting the characteristics of the VB-G RAM G Act, Iqbal said that besides providing opportunities, poverty alleviation is a key aspect of the Act and a lot of brainstorming has been done before implementing the Act to achieve this milestone.

Elaborating further, he said that this Act has increased the number of workdays from 100 to 125 and has been designed in such a way that maximum people can benefit from it. He said that every single citizen who lives in a rural area is a stakeholder in this and all citizens should come forward proactively to claim the benefits of this Act.

The programme also consisted of expert lectures by resource persons who talked at length about the various aspects of the VB-G RAM G Act. Tashi Paljor, Panchayat Inspector, Kharu Block spoke at length about why there was a need for such an act in the first place. He said that a major portion of the population of India lives in villages and sustainable development will not take place unless we improve the living conditions of the rural population.

Doda: District Committee approves 4 In-situ promotions

KT News Desk

DODA, AUGUST 24: A meeting of the Committee constituted by the District administration Doda for examination and disposal of Time Bound (In-situ) Promotion cases of eligible employees of the Revenue Department was held Monday. Deputy Commissioner Krishan Lal chaired the meeting held at the DC Office.

The Committee, as per an official statement, conducted detailed review of the service records and eligibility criteria of employees whose cases were placed before it for consideration. After thorough scrutiny and deliberations, the Committee approved the grant of Time Bound (In-situ) Promotion in favour of four eligible employees of the Revenue Department with effect from their respective due

dates. The Committee emphasized the need for timely processing of service-related matters and reviewed the status of pending cases to ensure that eligible employees receive their due benefits without unnecessary delay. It was reiterated that all promotion cases should be processed strictly in accordance with the prescribed rules and guidelines to maintain transparency and fairness in administrative functioning.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Doda, Accounts Officer Deputy Commissioner office Doda and concerned revenue officials. Assistant Commissioner Revenue Doda, Tehsildar Kastigarh, Tehsildar Bhalla, Tehsildar Chilly Pingal and Tehsildar Thatthri participated virtually.

Every Tree Gets a Name Jammu admin launches Paalna plantation drive across 815 institutions

KT News Desk

JAMMU, AUGUST 24: A whopping Sixty thousand saplings were Monday planted across Jammu district. Each tree will carry two names — the trees' and the student responsible for keeping it alive.

District Administration Jammu, as per an official statement, launched 'Paalna', a plantation campaign built on a single departure from convention: no sapling has been planted without an adopter. Every one of the 60,000 trees planted across 815 educational institutions has been adopted by a student or teacher, who will name it, care for it and submit monthly reports on its condition for one full year.

Each guardian received a certificate bearing a photograph of



their tree. Each tree also has a designated guardian for periods when schools are closed, so that care does not lapse during vacations. The district will publish how many of them survive.

The National Informatics Centre Jammu led by Director IT/District Informatics Officer, Sanjeev Kapoor has developed a dedicated web portal and dashboard tracking the survival, maintenance and growth of every individual plant over its

lifetime — tree by tree, school by school.

"Every tree here has a name and a child responsible for it. And every month, we will publish how many are still alive," said Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Dr Rakesh Minhas. "Our country has planted plenty of trees. But the number of survivors is not there. Jammu will produce that number. Paalna means to raise something — that is the difference between planting a tree and growing one."

Eid-Milad Un-Nabi arrangements finalised in Udhampur

KT News Desk

UDHAMPUR, AUGUST 24: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Minga Sherpa Monday chaired a meeting with district officers and representatives from civil society to finalize arrangements for the smooth and peaceful observance of Eid-Milad Un-Nabi.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Prem Singh, as per an official statement, along with the district officers and prominent citizens attended the meeting.

Detailed discussions were held on the arrangements for the auspicious day including adequate drinking water supply, uninterrupted power supply, quality and rate checking of eatables, security arrangements, traffic management and proper sanitation.

The DC directed the



concerned departments to ensure all necessary arrangements are put in place well in advance and maintained through close coordination with religious representatives and the local community.

Regarding security arrangements, the DC directed the concerned authorities to deploy adequate police personnel across the town. The Traffic Department was asked to deploy sufficient traffic personnel at congestion-prone areas to ensure smooth movement of traffic.

Justice reaches frontier as NALSA Jagriti programme held at GDC Tangdhar

KT News Desk

KUPWARA, AUGUST 24: In a significant outreach initiative aimed at taking legal awareness and access to justice to the remotest and far-flung areas of Jammu and Kashmir, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Kupwara, under the aegis of the Jammu & Kashmir Legal Services Authority (JKLSA) and in furtherance of the objectives of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), Monday organised an awareness programme on the NALSA JAGRITI (Justice Awareness for Grassroots Information and Transparency Initiative) Scheme, 2025, under the theme "Empowered Youth, Stronger India", at Government Degree College, Tangdhar.

Acting Chief Justice of High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Patron-in-Chief and Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority, Justice Sanjeev Kumar, was the chief guest on the occasion.

The programme, as per an official statement, was attended by M. K. Sharma, Registrar General, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh; Shazia Tabassum, Member Secretary,

J&K Legal Services Authority; Manjeet Singh Manhas, Principal District & Sessions Judge, Kupwara; Shrikant Suse, Deputy Commissioner, Kupwara and Syed Tahir Geelani, SSP Kupwara, besides officers of the district administration, police and education department, judicial officers, members of the Bar Association Tangdhar, faculty members, representatives of civil society and students from Government Degree College Tangdhar, Government Higher Secondary Schools and other educational institutions.

Addressing the gathering, Acting Justice Sanjeev Kumar emphasised that legal awareness is an important instrument of empowerment and that the justice delivery system must remain accessible to every section of society. He stressed that geographical distance and difficult terrain should never become a barrier to justice, particularly for people living in remote and frontier areas.

He appreciated NALSA for bringing out the JAGRITI Scheme, 2025, observing that the initiative provides an important framework for taking legal awareness and the



benefits of legal services to the grassroots. He particularly appreciated the efforts of the Jammu & Kashmir Legal Services Authority and DLSA Kupwara for taking the scheme to a remote and frontier area like Tangdhar, thereby giving practical expression to its grassroots philosophy.

The Acting Chief Justice emphasised that rights and duties go hand in hand. While every citizen must be aware of and exercise his or her rights, equal importance must be attached to understanding one's duties and respecting the rights of others. Such awareness, he observed, creates an environment in which everyone can exercise

his or her rights freely, with dignity and responsibility.

He also spoke about youth empowerment and legal literacy, saying that the young people constitute an important force in shaping the future of society. Knowledge of law, constitutional values, rights and responsibilities, he said, enables young persons to make informed decisions and become responsible citizens.

Addressing the issues concerning children and juvenile justice, the Acting Chief Justice emphasised the need for a sensitive, child-friendly and rehabilitative approach towards children in conflict with law. He stressed that children

should not be permanently labelled for mistakes committed at a young age and highlighted the importance of counselling, education, parental care, guidance and rehabilitation in helping them return to a constructive path.

He also drew attention to the growing challenge of substance abuse and drug trafficking, particularly among youth, emphasising that the menace cannot be addressed through punitive measures alone. He called for equal focus on prevention, early identification, counselling, treatment and rehabilitation and urged the young people facing difficulties to seek help without fear

or stigma.

On mental health, the Acting Chief Justice observed that mental and emotional well-being deserves the same attention as physical health. He called upon the parents, teachers and society to create an environment in which children and young people can speak about their concerns without fear or judgment. He also encouraged them to remain closely engaged with their children and understand their emotional well-being, friendships and online activities.

He highlighted the challenges associated with the digital environment, including cyber fraud, online harassment, identity misuse and misinformation. He emphasised the importance of digital awareness and responsible use of technology.

The Acting Chief Justice encouraged the girls and young women to pursue education, acquire skills, seek opportunities and participate fully in decision-making and public life. He said that their empowerment and equal participation are essential for the progress of society.

Calling for a proactive approach by the legal services institutions, he emphasised that District Legal Services

Authorities, Taluk Legal Services Committees, Panel Lawyers and Para-Legal Volunteers must reach out to people who need assistance rather than waiting for them to approach legal services institutions. He stressed that legal awareness generated through JAGRITI should not remain confined to a single programme but should be carried forward continuously through schools, colleges, villages and communities.

Earlier, the programme commenced with a welcome address by the Principal District & Sessions Judge, Kupwara, highlighted the importance of taking legal services and awareness initiatives to remote and frontier areas.

Thereafter, various speakers, including the Secretary, DLSA Kupwara, sensitised the gathering about the NALSA JAGRITI Scheme, 2025, its objectives, grassroots philosophy and the mechanism envisaged for its implementation. They highlighted the need for sustained legal awareness through schools, colleges, Legal Literacy Clubs, Para-Legal Volunteers, Legal Services Authorities, Taluk Legal Services Committees and other local institutions.

Ministry of MSME conducts entrepreneurship awareness prog in Kupwara’s Khumriyal

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Aug 24: Branch MMSE DFO Srinagar under Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) conducted an Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme (EAP) in the remote area of Khumriyal, Kupwara, with a special focus on the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) and PM Vishwakarma Scheme.

The programme was organised in collaboration with the District Administration, Kupwara, with the objective of taking awareness about government schemes and entrepreneurship opportunities to people in remote and underserved areas.

The programme was attended by senior officials from the District Administration, including the Chief Agriculture Officer, Kupwara; Lead District Manager (LDM), Kupwara; BDO concerned; Industrial Promotional officer (IPO) DIC Kupwara.

A.K. Tamaria, Head of Office, MSME-DFO Jammu, attended the programme as the Chief Guest.

In his inaugural address, A.K. Tamaria emphasised the importance of taking the schemes and programmes of the Ministry of MSME to remote areas so that people at the grassroots level are aware of the opportunities available to them and are able to avail the benefits.

He stated that MSMEs are the backbone of the Indian economy



and that greater awareness and participation are essential for strengthening entrepreneurship and employment generation at the local level.

In his keynote address, Saheel Alaqband, Assistant Director, Branch MSME-DFO Srinagar, highlighted the need to promote entrepreneurship activities in the region and encouraged local youth and aspiring entrepreneurs to come forward and explore the opportunities available under various government schemes.

Highlighting the achievements of the PM Vishwakarma Scheme in Jammu & Kashmir, he stated that the scheme has

made significant progress in the Union Territory, facilitating the reach of toolkits and other benefits to traditional artisans and craftspeople. He also highlighted the initiative of onboarding Vishwakarma products on Meesho free of cost, providing artisans with an opportunity to access wider markets and strengthen their livelihoods.

Alaqband further emphasised that several schemes and programmes are being implemented by different government departments, but their success depends significantly on people coming forward, acquiring information and availing the benefits available to them. He urged

the participants to actively explore these opportunities and consider entrepreneurship as a viable avenue for sustainable livelihood and employment generation.

The Chief Agriculture Officer, Munab, delivered a detailed presentation on various schemes and opportunities available through the Agriculture Department and related sectors, encouraging participants to explore entrepreneurship opportunities linked with agriculture and allied activities.

The Lead District Manager, Kupwara, explained the role of banks in supporting MSMEs through credit and financial

assistance. He highlighted the importance of proper financial planning and encouraged prospective entrepreneurs to approach banks for availing credit facilities under relevant government schemes.

Ishfaq Ahmad, Industrial Promotional officer (IPO), DIC Kupwara, elaborated on the PMEGP and PM Vishwakarma schemes, along with other schemes being implemented by the department. He explained the eligibility criteria, benefits and application processes, enabling participants to better understand how they could avail themselves of the available assistance.

The session was fruitfully moderated by Sajid, Young Professional, who facilitated interaction between the participants and the officials.

More than 50 participants from the remote area attended the programme. The session concluded with an interactive discussion during which participants raised queries and sought clarification from the officers regarding various schemes, eligibility requirements, financing and implementation procedures.

The programme reaffirmed the Ministry of MSME's commitment to taking entrepreneurship awareness and government schemes to the grassroots, particularly in remote areas, and empowering local youth, artisans and aspiring entrepreneurs to become self-reliant and contribute to local economic development.

Body of 12-yr-old boy recovered from Nallah Sindh

KNO Correspondent

Ganderbal, Aug 24 (KNO): The body of a 12-year-old boy who drowned in Nallah Sindh at Fatehpura area of central Kashmir's Ganderbal district on Sunday was recovered on Monday, officials said.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the body of the teenager was recovered

during a search operation launched following the incident this morning.

The deceased was identified as Mohsin Mukhtar (12), son of Mukhtar Ahmad Lone, a resident of Bamloora, Ganderbal.

Cognizance of the incident has been taken and the body will be handed over to the family after completion of necessary formalities. (KNO)

SWD Sgr organises discussion on ending stigma on menstruation

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Aug 24: Social Welfare Department, SANKALP-HEW Srinagar organised an Open-End Discussion on Ending stigma on Menstruation at Islamia College of Science and Technology, Hawal, Srinagar, with the objective of promoting awareness, understanding and open dialogue on menstrual health and hygiene.

The interactive programme provided a platform for students and participants to openly discuss various aspects related to menstruation, including menstrual hygiene, health concerns, common misconceptions and the importance of maintaining proper hygiene practices.

The discussion also focused on encouraging young people to approach menstruation as a natural biological process and to help create an environment where menstrual health can be discussed without stigma or hesitation.

Officials from Department of Social Welfare SANKALP-HEW Srinagar interacted with the participants and addressed their queries, while emphasising the importance of awareness, access to reliable information and supportive social attitudes towards menstrual health.

On the occasion, certificates were distributed among the students who participated in the debate in recognition of their active participation and contribution to the programme.

The Department stated that such awareness programmes are an important step towards empowering young people with correct information and fostering a more informed and sensitive society.

The programme concluded with an interactive exchange of views and questions from the participants, reflecting the importance of continued dialogue and awareness on menstrual health and hygiene.

India to amend rules to address semiconductor, auto component makers' concerns: Goyal

PTI

Tokyo, Aug 24: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Monday said India will amend its regulations and introduce new rules within the next two months to address concerns raised by semiconductor and auto component manufacturers here.

In a fireside chat with Nikkei Asia here, he said two large corporations -- one seeking to manufacture semiconductor

equipment in India and another in the automotive components sector -- had raised certain concerns.

"I have assured them that within the next two months, India will amend its regulations, bring in new rules to accommodate their request and ensure that they will have absolutely no problem as they bring manufacturing into India," he said.

The minister said the government has significantly

simplified the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) framework and is working to ease the approval process, including for suppliers that may not be covered under the revised regulations.

"There would be occasions where the demand may be only about importing goods from another country ...which is not conducive for fair trading practices and which is often known to supply goods at predatory prices.

"In those situations, obviously it is very difficult to meet the demands of certain sectors of industry, and I am not apologetic about it; I am very upfront and frank about this when they meet me," he added.

He added that the Union Cabinet has approved the Semicon 2.0 for the development of India's semiconductor design and manufacturing ecosystem, with a total budget outlay of Rs 1,27,500 crore.

"...together with the private sector, we are looking to seed about USD 50 billion of semiconductor and associated industry in the next year and a half. Once that is done, we will come out with semiconductors 3.0 because for us this is a journey," he added.

He said the government has significantly simplified the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) framework... and looks at making it more easier, including

for suppliers that may not yet be covered under the changed regulations.

Further, he pitched India as an independent investment destination, rather than an alternative to China.

"One can clearly see that for an economy like Japan, which has very good technologies, but not enough people, which has excellent business practices, but not enough market, India can be an excellent partner, which

provides economies of scale with a large domestic market, and India, which has opened its doors to international engagement with several free trade agreements," Goyal said.

"India is not a plus-one country; India stands on its own merits, on its own feet, as a trusted partner. We don't steal anybody's technology; we don't copy intellectual property products and bring them into the market," he added.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

CM defends 6.83%

kept the latest increase to the absolute minimum possible and pointed out that it came after a gap of four years. "We have raised electricity prices by only 6% and that too, after four years," he said, while referring to the rise in inflation, fuel prices and the overall cost of goods during the same period.

CM Omar also hit back at those criticising the tariff revision, saying previous governments had increased electricity rates by more than 14 per cent during their tenure without facing similar criticism. "Four years ago, rates went up by 15% and the BJP remained silent then as well," he said.

The Chief Minister said the government is not celebrating the tariff increase and called it as a compulsion arising from losses in the power sector. "We take no pleasure in raising electricity rates. This is a necessity for us," he said, adding that the need for such measures would reduce as electricity-related losses come down.

'200 FREE UNITS THROUGH SOLAR SCHEME' On the government's promise of providing 200 units of free electricity to the poorest households, Omar said the benefit would be implemented through a solar-based scheme.

He said the provision of free electricity and the general revision of power tariffs were two separate matters and had no connection with each other. "We stated that we would provide 200 units of free electricity to the poorest people and those who need it the most," he said.

CM Omar said he had also repeatedly explained in the Legislative Assembly that the government intended to deliver the benefit through a free electricity scheme using solar panels. "There is no connection between general electricity pricing and this specific scheme. We will continue to provide free electricity to those entitled to it," he said.

'NO IMMEDIATE CABINET RESHUFFLE' On speculation over a cabinet expansion or reshuffle, CM Omar said there is no crisis in the government and that administrative work was proceeding smoothly.

He said a reshuffle would be carried out whenever the government felt it was necessary. "We will do it when the time is right. Why are you all so anxious? No work has stalled. There is no crisis in the government. Our work is proceeding smoothly," he said.

The Chief Minister while replying to query about the cabinet reshuffle said, "You had asked me back then whether a reshuffle would happen before August 15th or not. I said it wouldn't. I never told you it would happen immediately after August 15th," he said.

He added that the timing and circumstances

of any reshuffle would be decided by him. "As for when or under what circumstances it will happen, leave that to me," he said.

'CALLS THREATS TO PANDIT EMPLOYEES SERIOUS'

On fresh threats received by Kashmiri Pandit employees, the Chief Minister termed the matter serious and urged the police, intelligence agencies and security administration to conduct a thorough investigation. "This has indeed become a serious issue. They should not be receiving threats at all," Omar said.

He said the authorities must identify the source of the threats and ensure the safety of government employees. "The law and order and security administrations including the police and our intelligence agencies must not take these matters lightly," he said.

The Chief Minister recalled that similar circumstances in the past had resulted in attacks on Pandit employees, saying the authorities must ensure that such threats do not escalate. "Two or 2.5 years ago, under similar circumstances, some Pandit employees were targeted and we suffered significant losses as a result," he said.

Clarifying that law and order and security fall under the purview of the Lieutenant Governor's administration, CM Omar urged the concerned agencies to treat the latest threats seriously.

"While this is not my direct responsibility, that falls under the purview of the J&K LG my advice to the law-and-order administration is simply this: do not treat this lightly. A full investigation must be conducted," he said. (KNO)

Lone cites NC

"And CM sahib has made a statement that he never said that he will not increase tariffs. To regig CM sahib's memory I am attaching the relevant page from NC election manifesto," Lone wrote. He further said that the CM and National Conference are not telling the people of Jammu & Kashmir that the Punjab government is providing 300 units of free electricity to all domestic consumers and Himachal Pradesh 125 units. "AAP's Bhagwant Mann took oath as Punjab Chief Minister in 2022 and rolled out the free electricity scheme in the same year. All domestic consumers in Punjab are receiving 300 units of free power. As per the 2026-27 tariff order released by the Punjab State Electricity Regulatory Commission, the scheme continues. Lakhs of families in Punjab are receiving zero electricity bills, and the Punjab government has repeatedly claimed that 90% of households are getting zero bills," Lone said.

He added that all domestic consumers in neighbouring Himachal Pradesh are receiving 125 units of free electricity. "All domestic

consumers in Himachal Pradesh have been receiving 125 units of free electricity since 2022—a scheme first introduced by then Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur and continued by his successor and incumbent Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu. Lakhs of families in HP are benefiting from free electricity," Lone said.

Lone accused the CM and the ruling National Conference (NC) of going back on their election promise of providing relief in electricity tariffs. Lone pointed out that the recent 6.8% tariff hike translates into an additional burden of over Rs 500 crore on consumers.

He said unsuspecting families were waiting for the promised 200 units of free electricity per month, but instead faced higher bills. He added that in non-metered areas, household load was increased, raising bills by nearly 10%.

Lone further the free power promise was later restricted only to AAY ration card holders, covering about 200,000 families.

He calculated that over 22 months, each consumer is owed 4400 units of free electricity, equal to Rs 11000 per household.

For 200000 families, Lone said, this amounts to Rs 220 crore. "CM sahib owes 2200 crore to the people and has the audacity to put a burden of 500 crore," Lone charged. (KNO)

Apni Party, PDP

of a procession.

Talking to reporters, Mir said the government has increased power tariffs despite people facing unemployment, shrinking business opportunities and rising prices.

"It is unfortunate that, despite being fully aware that people are already facing severe financial hardships, the government has chosen to increase power tariffs," he said, demanding immediate withdrawal of the decision.

Mir also accused the ruling party of failing to honour its election promises, saying the government had promised 200 units of free electricity and free gas cylinders to households but had instead increased the power tariff.

Meanwhile, PDP leaders and workers also staged a protest against the tariff hike, at party headquarters accusing Omar Abdullah-led government of failing to address the concerns of ordinary consumers.

Protesters raised slogans against the government and termed the tariff increase an "anti-people" measure, saying it would add to the financial burden on households already facing inflation and economic difficulties.

PDP leaders and workers, in their protest, also accused the government of overall failure and opposed the tariff hike, demanding relief for consumers.

Pertinently, the protests comes after the Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission (JERC) approved an average 6.83 per cent increase in electricity tariffs for Jammu and Kashmir, with the revised rates scheduled to take effect from September 01. (KNO)

LG Sinha celebrates

harmony.

Ahead of the Raksha Bandhan, which will be celebrated on August 28, 2026, the event offered the young students a unique opportunity to engage with the Lieutenant Governor.

Dr. Shashwata Shiva, Principal, DPS, Baramulla, Coordinators, teachers and officer bearers of the school also accompanied the students. (KNO)

Omar directs SED

the matter must be dealt with firmly and that appropriate action be taken based on the findings of the inquiry.

CM announces phased

and other essential facilities."

The Chief Minister's Office said that the upgradation will ensure continuity in school education, expand access to Classes XI and XII.

It also said that it will help in reducing the dropouts at the critical transition after Class 10, particularly in underserved areas. (KNO)

Hot, humid weather

The weather office cautioned that brief intense showers at localised places could trigger flash floods, mudslides and landslides, particularly in vulnerable areas.

TEMPERATURES REMAIN ABOVE NORMAL

Meanwhile, temperatures remained largely above normal at several places in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday.

Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 30.5 degrees Celsius against a normal of 29.3 degrees, while the minimum temperature settled at 16.4 degrees.

Qazigund recorded a maximum of 29.8 degrees and a minimum of 14 degrees, while Pahalgam recorded 25 degrees and 11.7 degrees, respectively.

In North Kashmir, Kupwara recorded a maximum of 30.2 degrees and a minimum of 14.8 degrees. Kokernag recorded 28.4 degrees during the day, while its minimum temperature was 14.2 degrees.

Gulmarg, meanwhile, remained cooler with a maximum of 21 degrees and a minimum of 9 degrees.

In the Jammu region, Jammu city recorded a maximum temperature of 34.3 degrees and a minimum of 24.2 degrees. Katra recorded 32.5 degrees during the day, while Banihal recorded

29.5 degrees.

The weather office advised farmers that harvesting and other agricultural operations could continue, while urging people in vulnerable areas to remain cautious during intense rainfall spells. (KNO)

GOC 16 Corps reviews

troops and various stakeholders deployed in the forward areas.

He also took stock of the security situation, operational preparedness measures and the readiness of formations operating in the challenging mountainous terrain of the Poonch Sector, where troops remain deployed under demanding weather and operational conditions," the statement said, adding, "During his interaction with personnel, the Corps Commander commended the troops for their high morale, professionalism and operational readiness. He appreciated their dedication and commitment in maintaining constant vigilance and ensuring the security of the area."

He also emphasised the need to sustain high standards of operational preparedness, continuously enhance operational capabilities and remain prepared to effectively respond to emerging security challenges, the statement said.

Pertinently, the Poonch Sector, located along the LoC in the Jammu region, remains a strategically important operational area due to its rugged terrain and history of cross-border hostilities, including ceasefire violations and infiltration attempts. (KNO)

High-density apples

may not be achieved.

Experts also point out that the system requires regular pruning, irrigation, fertilisation and plant-protection measures.

Although establishment costs are higher than those of traditional orchards, the higher productivity, earlier fruiting and improved quality can help farmers recover the investment over time, they said.

Reshie said the government's continued support would be important for encouraging more growers to make the transition.

"Farmers need quality planting material, technical guidance and financial support during the initial years, and if these facilities are provided properly, more growers can shift to high-density cultivation and improve their income," he said.

Despite the growing adoption of modern plantations, traditional orchards continue to occupy an important place in Kashmir's horticulture economy, with growers believing that modernisation should complement rather than completely replace the existing orchard system—(KNO)

H1N1 cases are rising but no sign of new or more dangerous strain; experts urge caution, not panic

PTI

New Delhi, Aug 24: H1N1 influenza cases have increased in Delhi and parts of North India in recent weeks, with experts advising people, particularly those at higher risk of complications, to take precautions but stressed that there is no evidence of the virus becoming more virulent.

Speaking to PTI Videos, former WHO chief scientist and former ICMR director general Dr Soumya Swaminathan said H1N1 is a known strain of influenza and not a new virus.

"There is no evidence of a major antigenic shift or that the virus has become more virulent or dangerous," Dr Swaminathan said, adding that the recent increase in cases was consistent with seasonal influenza activity, particularly during the monsoon and winter months.

The strain that caused the 2009 swine flu pandemic has continued to circulate globally.

Swaminathan said that most people recover from the infection with adequate rest, fluids and symptomatic treatment.

However, elderly people,



children, particularly those below five years of age, pregnant women and those with underlying chronic illnesses are at greater risk of complications.

Warning signs such as breathlessness, bluish lips or nails, inability to eat or drink, altered consciousness, rapid breathing, vomiting or unusual irritability in children warrant prompt medical attention, Swaminathan said. Former AIIMS director Dr Randeep Guleria

said H1N1 cases were currently rising in Delhi but were expected to decline as the monsoon recedes.

He advised people, especially those in high-risk groups, to take precautions against influenza infection.

Physician, public health and health policy expert Dr Chandrakant Lahariya said H1N1 was not a new influenza subtype.

People with diabetes, hypertension or obesity, along with

pregnant women, elderly persons and children, may be at higher risk of complications, he said.

Those experiencing flu-like symptoms such as fever, cough, headache and body ache should consult a doctor and avoid taking antibiotics unless prescribed, Lahariya said.

Patients should get adequate rest, stay hydrated, maintain electrolyte balance and ensure sufficient food intake during the illness, he added.

Severe influenza can lead to complications such as pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) and, in some cases, brain infection, said Dr Rashmi Kapoor, head of the Department of Paediatrics at Regency Healthcare, Kanpur.

Parents should ensure that children remain adequately hydrated and seek immediate medical attention if they develop breathing difficulties or seizures, Kapoor said. She also advised parents to consider seasonal flu vaccination for children. Dr Abhishek Tandon, consultant in respiratory and sleep medicine at Medanta, Lucknow, said H1N1 influenza

was widespread in north India but there was no need to panic.

Most cases present as a mild and self-limiting upper respiratory infection, with symptoms including fever, sneezing, runny nose, sore throat, dry cough, breathlessness, weakness and fatigue, he said.

Tandon advised against taking antibiotics or steroids over the counter and said high-risk patients and those with underlying health conditions may require antiviral treatment, such as oseltamivir, following medical consultation.

Most infections resolve within three to five days, Tandon said.

On Sunday, ICMR sources said that no new strain of H1N1 has been identified and there is no cause for panic. The Influenza strains currently circulating are "well matched with the vaccine strains recommended for the Northern Hemisphere", they said.

"The rise in H1N1 cases has brought preventive vaccination back into the conversation," said Dr Bharat Gopal, senior director, Respiratory and Sleep Medicine, Medanta Mediclinic, Defence Colony and Medanta-The

Medicity.

Envoys of 6 nations present credentials to President Murmu



PTI

New Delhi, Aug 24: President Droupadi Murmu on Monday received credentials from the envoys of six nations, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Moldova and Germany, at a ceremony held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here.

Among those who presented their credentials were Sitona Abdalla Osman, Ambassador of the Republic of South Sudan, Abdulla Saif Ali Slayem Al Nuaimi, Ambassador of the UAE, and Muhammad Saidu Dahiru, High Commissioner of the Federal

Republic of Nigeria, a statement issued by the President's office said.

Inga Ionesii, Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova, Jasper Wieck, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany and Petra Menander, Ambassador of Sweden, also presented their credentials, it said.

President Murmu had on July 20 visited Moldova, the first by any Indian head of state, as part of her three-nation tour of European countries aimed at boosting ties in trade, technology and tourism sectors among others.

Govt appoints ex-diplomat Akbaruddin, 2 other new members to RBI central board

PTI

Mumbai, Aug 24: The central government has appointed former diplomat Syed Akbaruddin, ex-bureaucrat Annie George Mathew, and consultancy BCG India Chairman Janmejaya Kumar Sinha to RBI central board.

They have been appointed as part-time, Non-official Directors on the Central Board of Reserve Bank of India for four years with effect from August 24 or until further orders, whichever is earlier, the central bank said in a release on Monday.

Last week, the government had re-appointed industrialist Anand Gopal Mahindra as part-time, Non-official Director on the board. Former ISRO

Chairman Somanath Sreedhara Panicker was also appointed on the board last week.

Other members of the board include Revathy Iyer, a retired officer from the Indian Audit & Accounts Service, who went on to become the Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General, Government Accounts, and Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General of think tank Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS).

Governor Sanjay Malhotra, deputy governors Swaminathan J, Poonam Gupta, SC Murmu and Rohit Jain, economic affairs secretary Anuradha Thakur and financial services secretary Sanjay Lohia are also on the board.

Sensex climbs over 200 pts in early trade, Nifty tops 24,300 on blue-chip buying

PTI

Mumbai, Aug 24: Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty were trading higher in early trade on Monday, driven by buying in blue-chip stocks HDFC Bank and Infosys amid positive global cues.

However, persistent geopolitical tensions and elevated crude oil prices continue to hamper risk appetite, an expert said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 202.42 points to 77,744.15 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty was up 55.35 points to 24,309.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, Infosys, HCL Tech, Tata Steel, Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services and HDFC Bank were among the major winners.

Asian Paints, Titan, Power Grid and Bharat Electronics were among the laggards.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded

1.32 per cent lower at USD 93.14 per barrel.

"Middle East tensions continue to shape the broader market mood. Iran has warned of retaliation against countries participating in the US 'economic war', reinforcing concerns that the confrontation could deepen rather than ease in the near term.

"For Indian investors, the prolonged US-Iran standoff and its implications for energy prices remain a key source of uncertainty," Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth-tech firm, said.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index were trading lower.

US markets ended higher on Friday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 542.71 crore on Friday, according to exchange data.

EAM Jaishankar meets Russian President Putin

Discusses bilateral ties, global developments

PTI

Moscow, Aug 24: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday called on Russian President Vladimir Putin, as the two sides discussed bilateral ties and global developments.

Jaishankar, who arrived in Moscow on Sunday, is on a two-day visit to Russia. It comes ahead of Putin's expected visit to New Delhi for the BRICS leaders' summit on September 12-13.

The meeting assumes significance as India and Russia seek to deepen their economic engagement and expand cooperation in a



range of areas.

Earlier in the day, the foreign minister held talks with Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov on ways to further expand bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

"The India-Russia partnership has consistently demonstrated resilience and adaptability," Jaishankar said at an event

which he co-chaired with Manturov. "Even amidst a complex international landscape, our engagement has continued to deepen, reflecting the mutual interest and confidence that define our bilateral partnership."

During his visit, Jaishankar is also scheduled to meet Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to

exchange views on regional and global issues, the External Affairs Ministry said in a statement on Saturday.

The visit comes a month after Jaishankar and Lavrov met in Manila on July 22 on the sidelines of ASEAN-related ministerial meetings, where they reviewed bilateral relations and exchanged views on the Ukraine conflict and the situation in West Asia. Jaishankar had also reiterated India's "strong concern" regarding the safety of Indian seafarers in the region during his last meeting with Lavrov.

Bank unions threaten nationwide strike on Sep 11

To press for 5-day banking, other demands



PTI

New Delhi, Aug 24: The United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU) has decided to go on a nationwide strike on September 11 over the delay in implementing five-day banking, differences over the performance-linked incentive scheme, and several pending demands, including pension-related issues.

If the strike materialises, banking services, especially in public sector banks, would be impacted for four days in many parts of the country.

September 11 is a Friday, and the subsequent two days are bank holidays.

September 14 is a holiday in some states for Ganesh Chaturthi.

UFBU, an umbrella body of nine bank employees' and officers' unions, has also

threatened a three-day subsequent nationwide strike beginning September 28, coinciding with the half-yearly closure. They have also decided to go on an indefinite strike from October 26 onwards if their demands fall on deaf ears of the government and bank management.

The decision was taken at a meeting held on Sunday, following what the unions described as the government's 'negative attitude' towards their key demands, the UFBU said in a statement.

On five-day banking, it said the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) had agreed to the proposal as part of the 12th Bipartite Settlement/9th Joint Note signed on March 8, 2024, under which working hours would be increased by 40 minutes from Monday to Friday. The proposal was

subsequently recommended to the government, but has remained pending for more than two years, it said.

The unions have also objected to the government's PLI scheme for bank officers in Scale IV and above, saying it differs from the understanding reached with the IBA that performance-linked incentive would be linked to the overall performance of individual banks and would be uniform for employees and officers up to Scale VII.

Under the government's scheme, officers in Scale IV and above could receive PLI of up to 365 days of basic pay based on individual performance, while workmen employees and officers up to Scale III would receive a maximum of 15 days' basic pay plus dearness allowance, it said.

The issue of PLI is currently under conciliation before the Chief Labour Commissioner (CLC) following the strike call issued by the UFBU and is also pending before the Delhi High Court, it claimed.

The UFBU further alleged that despite the pendency of conciliation proceedings and its offer to hold bilateral discussions with the IBA, the Department of Financial Services (DFS) has advised banks to implement the government's performance-linked incentive scheme.

JPSC exam irregularities SC seeks Centre, Jharkhand govt response on plea for CBI probe



PTI

New Delhi, Aug 24: The Supreme Court on Monday sought responses from the Centre, Jharkhand government and others on a plea seeking an independent, time-bound CBI probe into alleged malpractices in the Jharkhand Combined Civil Services Preliminary Examination 2025.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and

Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana issued notices to the Union of India, the Jharkhand government, the Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) and other respondents.

Senior advocate Manan Kumar Mishra, appearing for the petitioner, told the bench that the plea seeks either a CBI investigation or an inquiry by a former judge of the Supreme Court. The top court was

greater efficiency, transparency and improved support for students and teachers," the Minister said in a post on X.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) was at the centre of controversy for its digital evaluation system.

Former chairman Rahul Singh and secretary Himanshu Gupta were transferred out in June amid mounting scrutiny over the board's on-screen marking (OSM) system and alleged irregularities in the full-scale rollout of the platform used to assess Class 12 answer scripts.

hearing a petition filed by activist Harisharan Devgan through advocate Satyam Singh Rajput, seeking judicial intervention over alleged irregularities in the examination.

The petition has raised concerns over the conduct of the Jharkhand Combined Civil Services Preliminary Competitive Examination 2025, conducted by the JPSC pursuant to Advertisement No. 01/2026 on April 19, 2026.

"The present writ petition under Article 32 of the Constitution of India is being preferred in public interest seeking urgent intervention of this court in relation to serious and substantial concerns regarding the integrity, fairness, transparency and credibility of the Jharkhand Combined Civil Services Preliminary Competitive Examination 2025, conducted by respondent no. 2 Jharkhand Public Service Commission pursuant to Advertisement No. 01/2026 on April 19, 2026," it said.

The bench sought responses from the concerned authorities on the petition and its allegations.

PM Modi to address country's youth on Thursday ahead of National Sports Day

PTI

New Delhi, Aug 24: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the youth of the country, including sports persons, across more than 1500 locations on Thursday to mark the occasion of the National Sports Day which falls on August 29.

Modi's virtual address will be part of the nationwide programme 'Khelo India Samvaad - Khel Ki Baat, PM Ke Saath', a major initiative of the sports ministry to be held two days ahead of the National Sports Day.

Hockey legend Dhyan Chand's birth anniversary, which falls on August 29, is celebrated as the National Sports Day in the country.

"Key excerpts from the Hon'ble Prime Minister's Independence Day message on Sports and Youth Power will also be showcased. This will be followed by the virtual address of the Hon'ble Prime Minister to the youth across the country," Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said during a media briefing.

"Through this initiative, youth, athletes and educational institutions are being brought together at 1,500+ locations across the country.

"IITs, IIMs, NITs, AIIMS, premier medical colleges and universities, along with other leading educational institutions, are participating in this nationwide campaign."

He said the programme is a major effort to create a direct dialogue between sports-loving youth and India's policymakers, providing young people with an



opportunity to share their ideas, experiences and suggestions. The programme will begin with a welcome by MY Bharat volunteers, followed by a special video presentation highlighting the transformational changes in India's sporting ecosystem over the past 12 years.

Following the Prime Minister's address, physical programmes will commence at 1,500+ locations across the country.

At the national capital, the celebration will be held in four-five locations, including one at the IIT, Delhi, where Mandaviya will grace the occasion.

"I will be present at the IIT Delhi for the celebrations (on August 27)," the minister said.

Leading former and current Indian athletes and international medal winners, including Indian Olympic

Association President PT Usha will also interact with the youth of the country.

Other prominent sports persons who will interact with the youth include Manika Batra, Deepa Karmakar, Saina Nehwal, Gagan Narang, Sreejesh, Mary Kom, Baichung Bhutia, Pullela Gopichand, Anju Bobby George, Karnam Malleswari, Mirabai Chanu, and some cricketers.

"They (the youth) will share their journeys, challenges, failures, successes and sporting experiences with young participants," Mandaviya said.

"The objective of the event is to inspire young people with the belief that a champion's journey does not begin in a grand stadium, but with a small field and a first attempt."

Members of Parliament, Members of Legislative Assemblies, Union Ministers,

Ministers of State and State Sports Ministers will participate in the programme. "These elected representatives and dignitaries will engage with youth and seek their ideas and suggestions on the four key themes," he said.

Key objectives of the programme Mandaviya said key objectives include the sharing by the youth of their ideas, suggestions and innovative thoughts on four key themes related to sports and youth.

"First, strengthening the sports ecosystem by ensuring better facilities, coaching and opportunities reach the grassroots. Second, nurturing talent for the 2036 Olympics, with a focus on scientific talent identification and athlete development.

"Third, strengthening youth leadership and increasing youth participation in governance. Fourth, Youth Empowerment for Viksit Bharat, including future-ready skills, volunteering and opportunities for nation-building," he said. The suggestions gathered through the programme will be taken directly to policymakers and the wider sports ecosystem, helping connect ground-level experiences and youth aspirations with policy making.

As part of youth engagement activities, a Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue (VBLYD) Quiz will be organised. Youth will also be encouraged to register on the MY Bharat Portal.

The objective is to connect young people beyond a one-day event and make them part of a long-term national youth engagement ecosystem.

Syria sentences Assad-era grand mufti to life imprisonment



AFP

Damascus, Aug 24: A former Islamic religious leader was sentenced to life in prison on Monday in the latest Syrian court trial of officials affiliated with the rule of ex-President Bashar Assad.

Former grand mufti Ahmad Badreddine Hassoun, an Assad loyalist who was vocally in support of the government's policies, was convicted of inciting violence and justifying murder. He held the position of mufti from 2005 to 2021, when the position was abolished.

Judge Fakhreddine Al-Aryan, head of the Fourth Criminal Court in Damascus, said the official religious establishment under Assad's

rule had "justified the use of barrel bombs that targeted civilian areas and caused widespread destruction, which constitutes a violation of the rules of international humanitarian law."

Several other senior Assad-era officials — including Assad himself and his brother, Maher — have been sentenced to death in recent weeks, many of them in absentia. Hassoun was in custody and present in the court.

Some human rights groups have expressed concerns that the trials are being rushed and are potentially unfair, but the sentences have been welcomed by many Syrians who had previously expressed frustration that the new government was not moving with enough speed or strength against Assad-era figures.

Mass anti-government protests erupted in Syria in 2011 and were met by a brutal government crackdown, spiraling into a nearly 14-year civil war that left about half a million people dead and displaced more than half of Syria's prewar population of 23 million.

The war ended with the ouster of Assad in a lightning offensive by Islamist-led insurgents in December 2024.

Batting with Pant is a terrific experience, I seek his advice: Jurel

PTI

Colombo, Aug 24: Dhruv Jurel's Instagram bio is simple yet catchy. It reads Mamba Mentality — a term coined by basketball legend Kobe Bryant to describe his efforts to become the best version of himself.

Jurel's unbeaten 115 on the second day of the second Test against Sri Lanka here on Monday was a testimony of his devotion to that motto. At one end, Rishabh Pant, with whom he built a 112-run stand, was playing in his archetypal way for 63, but Jurel concentrated on his strengths to accumulate runs.

Jurel explained his batting methods while batting alongside a sparkling shot-maker like Pant. "We all know Pant is such a terrific player and what he has done for India in Australia and England. So, whenever he is in, I only seek his advice, because he has so much experience. So, I always ask him for advice as, what I should do in a particular situation," Jurel said in the post-day press conference and dedicated his second Test hundred to his parents.

But does he get tempted to copy the dominating ways of Pant? "As you can see, Test cricket has different ways of playing, and it makes the game beautiful. When you play with Pant, it's a very terrific experience. I can't play like him, the way he has been playing since childhood.

New Zealand moves to ban social media for under-16s

AFP

Auckland, Aug 24: New Zealand's government introduced legislation on Monday to ban under 16s from using social media, joining a number of countries seeking to keep youngsters off sites such as Instagram and TikTok.

Australia implemented world-first legislation banning children from social media in December, with the UK, France and others following suit.

Under New Zealand's proposed law, firms like Meta could be fined up to 10 percent of their global revenue if they fail to comply. "We simply cannot accept the harm being done to a generation of New Zealand children," Prime Minister



Christopher Luxon said.

"One in three children aged between 13 and 17 are now spending at least five hours on social media a day," he said.

"Social media is exposing them to harmful content, addictive technology and pressures they are not equipped to deal with, and it's affecting their family life, mental health,

sleep and education."

Luxon specifically called out platforms Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat and Facebook, saying they would be required to take "reasonable steps to check users are over the age of 16."

They would have to use "existing account information, facial age estimation, digital ID services and formal ID" to verify age. Platforms would also be required to assess the risks they pose as well as report on how those dangers are being reduced, with penalties slapped on companies that fail to comply. Education Minister Erica Stanford said the Bill "places legal obligations on platforms."

"No penalties are proposed for children, their parents or caregivers," Stanford said.

Iran threatens response ahead of US sanctions announcement

DUBAI: Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson warned that Tehran would respond harshly to expanded US sanctions, including measures against countries it sees as cooperating with Washington.

"Any escalation of this situation will undoubtedly bring about consequences," Esmail Baghaei said. "Our hands are not tied."

The new head of Iran's top security body warned Sunday that Tehran will see any country's support for the sanctions as an "act of war".

The expanded sanctions come after weeks of impasse. The United States has not dislodged Iran's grip on the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's traded oil passed before the war started nearly six months ago.

Iran's demands for reopening the strait include lifting the US naval



blockade, withdrawing US forces from the region and reparations for damages sustained in the war. It has held separate talks with Oman, on the other side of the strait, on jointly managing the waterway regardless of whether a new deal is brokered with the US.

Sanctions have historically raised prices of basic goods in Iran, but after decades of withstanding them, Iran's economy has adapted through finding new trading partners and building domestic industries.

Srinagar Indoor Taekwondo Academy shines at Chenab Open

Wins 8 gold, 4 silver, 5 bronze medals; academy bags 2nd runner-up trophy

Suvaid, Abbas, Aleena among gold winners; Zaheeb, Essa, Aiman figure among silver medallists



KNO Correspondent

Srinagar, Aug 24 (KNO): Indoor Taekwondo Academy put up a strong show at the Chenab Open Taekwondo Championship, clinching the 2nd runner-up trophy after its athletes bagged 17 medals, including eight gold, four silver and five bronze.

The gold medal winners included Suvaid Ahmad, Abbas Khursheed, Aleena Nisar, Hafida Rafiq, Ajiya Nasir, Aayat Jan, Mehreen Jan, Serrat Ayub and Zain Nazir.

Zaheeb Javaid Malik, Essa Bin Sajid, Aiman Bashir and Suvaid Ahmad secured silver medals, while Mohammed Musineen, Mohammed Eesa Bhat, Aftab Malik, Zunaira Fatimah and Aleena Nisar won bronze medals in their

respective events.

As per the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), in the Poomsae event, Suvaid Ahmad and Aiman Bashir secured silver medals, while Aleena Nisar won bronze.

The academy team was led by international Taekwondo player and coach Zain Nazir, who is currently coaching at the Taekwondo Centre, Gindun Stadium, Rajbagh.

The athletes competed under his guidance, helping the academy secure the 2nd runner-up trophy at the championship.

Coach Zain Nazir and the entire Srinagar Indoor Taekwondo team expressed their heartfelt gratitude to Master Atul Pangotra (Chief Coach, J&K Taekwondo) from Jammu. The team highlighted that Master Atul Pangotra's

guidance, mentorship, and constant support have been instrumental in providing athletes with crucial exposure and platforms across District, State, National, and International levels.

The team also extended sincere thanks to the District Doda Taekwondo Association and the Jammu & Kashmir Taekwondo Association for their immense support and seamless organization of the championship.

Coach Zain Nazir congratulated the athletes on their performance and lauded their determination and hard work. He also thanked the parents for their continued support and encouragement, saying the achievement belonged to the entire Indoor Taekwondo Academy family.—(KNO)

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