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WEATHER TEMPERATURE			SUNSET SATURDAY: 05:32 PM
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE	SUNRISE SUNDAY: 07:37 AM
	ACT	ACT	
SRINAGAR	12.4	-2.8	LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR Generally Cloudy sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 13°C & -3°C respectively.
JAMMU	23.4	7.6	
LEH	4.5	-11.4	
KARGIL	0.6	-9.2	

RNI NO: JKENG/2015/62397 • PRICE RS.3/- (AIR SURCHARGE FOR DELHI, JAMMU & LADAKH 50/- PAISA)

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2017, a relatively calm year for J&K

SRINAGAR: After a tumultuous 2016, Kashmir witnessed a relatively calm year but there were many issues, including the legal challenge in the Supreme Court to Article 35-A of the Constitution pertaining to special residency laws of Jammu and Kashmir, that hogged national headlines.

However, one of the biggest stories emanating from Kashmir in 2017 was the cancellation of by-poll to the Anantnag Lok Sabha seat — vacated by Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti in April last year — in view of widespread violence during polling for Srinagar Lok Sabha seat by-election which left nine persons dead and scores others injured.

As the street protests of 2016 had not fully died down even in the spring of 2017, the PDP-BJP coalition government was not keen on holding the by-elections so soon. However, Election Commission went ahead with the process of polls.

The results were disastrous on almost all fronts.



Such were the apprehensions of trouble around elections that authorities snapped Internet facilities a day before the polling on 9 April for the Srinagar Lok Sabha seat.

By the time polling ended, eight persons were dead — with another succumbing few days later. Only seven per cent voters turned up to exercise their franchise.

National Conference patriarch Farooq Abdullah, who lost in 2014,

Initially, the Election Commission pushed back the date for polling by a month but later cancelled the election altogether.

It was for the first time since 1991 that an election could not be conducted in Kashmir due to violence and apprehension of it spreading to entire valley.

While the 1991 Lok Sabha polls were not held in entire Jammu and Kashmir due to eruption of militancy, the Anantnag bypoll had to be cancelled due to threat to law and order by stone-pelting people.

The National Investigating Agency (NIA) stepped in to investigate the phenomenon of stone-pelting, especially as the youth were hampering the anti-militancy operations, after senior separatist leader Nayeem Khan admitted on camera that they were receiving funds to keep the Kashmir pot boiling.

Khan, several other separatist leaders and few businessmen were arrested by the NIA which found them

PDP-BJP coordination committee to meet today

Govt functioning, Budget session, this year's performance on agenda, says Madni

Srinagar, Dec 29 (KNS): The coordination committee of the PDP and BJP coalition partners are expected to meet on Saturday and discuss various issues relating to the functioning of the government in Jammu and Kashmir.

The PDP vice president Sartaj Madni told Kashmir News Service (KNS) that the coordination committee is scheduled to meet on Saturday wherein it will discuss the functioning of the PDP-BJP coalition in Jammu and Kashmir along with the major achievements and agendas of the present regime.

Madni added that the coming budget session and government priorities are also on agenda of the scheduled meet.

It was informed further that ahead of the coming budget session, the coordination committee of the ruling alliance in the state will meet on Saturday under the chairmanship of Deputy Chief Minister Nirmal Singh.

Reports inform that besides government's

TEACHER POSTS ARE FILLED ON BASIS OF VACANCY POSITION IN EACH DISTRICT: EDU DEPTT

Refutes media report

Jammu, Dec 29: The Government today refuted a news report that appeared in some sections of the media regarding referral of posts of Teacher by the School Education Department for selection of suitable candidates under direct recruitment quota to the Services Selection Board

Kashmir Tourism Sector in Doldrums

Srinagar, Dec 29: Kashmir and tourism are more often viewed as synonymous terms. Kashmir is rich with scenic natural beauty that has no other analogy in the world. It is rightly called 'paradise on earth'.

This great scenic attribute has made Kashmir world famous for its tourism potential. Tourism industry is traditionally considered as the backbone of Kashmir's economy. With the growth in tourism industry other related sectors like handicrafts, hotel industry, tour and travel agencies, retail trade market, and floriculture boost up. Thus, the overall economy grows. But this year tourism industry did not pick up due to turbulent situations and often upheavals.

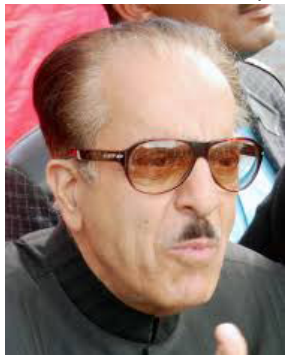
The past of tourism industry of Kashmir has been very magnificent. But due to the disturbance in the region for more than two and half decades now, the tourism industry has been badly

Parliament's declaration over Triple Talaq in one-go is criminal offence: Soz

Says Parliament shows Muslim Personal Law Board in poor light

Srinagar, Dec 29: Senior Congress leader and former union minister, Prof. Saifuddin Soz Friday said that Parliament's declaration over Triple Talaq in one-go is criminal offence, stating that the All India Muslim Personal Law Board must do a serious thinking on its future.

According to the statement issued to KNS, Soz said that "I am one of those persons who tried to show utmost respect to All India Muslim Personal Law Board all these



years, although I had serious reservations on the functioning of the Board. The Board had been functioning arbitrarily and totally undemocratically all these years, leaving the victim Muslim women to fend for themselves in courts, miserably and helplessly."

"Now that the parliament has declared 'Triple Divorce in one-go' as criminal offence, the Board must do a serious thinking on its future," he said.

He said that the Board must set its house in order by proving its representative

Dr Drabu reviews expenditure, liability position of key departments

42% capex budget released upto Nov 2017 compared to 28% for corresponding period of previous fiscal

Jammu, Dec 29: Minister for Finance, Labour & Employment, Dr Haseeb Drabu has stressed the need for keeping liabilities under check and to ensure that the projects are taken up in consonance with the resource allocations to avoid unwarranted fiscal liabilities.

This was stated by the Finance Minister while chairing a meeting to discuss the expenditure and liability position of various key departments.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary B B Vyas, Principal Secretary Finance



Illegal sale of LPG cylinders continues unabated in Anantnag District

Sameer Kashmiri

Anantnag, Dec 29: The illegal refilling of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) is turning out to be a highly profitable business in the Anantnag District and those involved in the illegal trade mint huge profit. The activity increases during winters in Kashmir, mostly in towns and cities.

LPG is illegally transferred from a cooking gas cylinder to any other cylinder for

Sharia is supreme than everything: Er Rasheed

Condemns Dr Farooq, Beigh's silence in Parliament

Baramulla, Dec 29: Urging Muslim organization to raise their voice against the bill passed by Indian parliament banning triple Talak, MLA Langate, Engineer Abdul Rasheed has condemned the criminal silence of Farooq Abdullah and Muzaffar Beigh over this serious issue in the parliament.

While interacting with people from different sections of society at Bandi (Uri) today, Er Rasheed as per the statement issued to KNS said that not only Muslims but followers of any religion will never allow interference in its religious affairs.

"Neither Indian Govt is really worried about the fate of Muslim women in India nor is there any logic in interpreting Sharia in its own way. No one should be afraid of Sharia and other Islamic laws as Islam gives full and



due respect and protection to women than any other religion or law in the world. For every Muslim Quran and Sunah are supreme and show a complete way of living life," he said.

He said that while in India crime against

Days after regularization, casual labours welcome move

'Hope Govt will fulfill its assurances'

Srinagar, Dec 29: Welcoming the regularization process initiated by the government, the Jammu and Kashmir Casual/Daily wagers Forum (JKCDF) Friday hoped that the state government will fulfill the assurances made with them.

Addressing a news conference here at Lala Rukh, president of the Forum, Sajad

Panchayat polls should be held under Panchayat Election Commission only: Monga

Srinagar, Dec 29: While welcoming the Government's decision to hold Panchayat elections from February 15, Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) Vice President and MLC G N Monga today said the Panchayat polls should be held under Panchayat Election Commission only.

In a statement issued to KNS, he said, "Past experiences shows how this government disempowered Panchayati Raj Institutions in the state. If the Government is sincere this time, it should announce the dates for holding three tier Panchayat polls in the Assembly. The past experiences show that this government several times announced the dates for holding the Panchayat elections, but later on one or other pretext postpone these."



"The Panchayati Raj should be implemented only through 73rd Amendment of

HEALTH EMPLOYEES HOLD BLACK BAND PROTEST: DAK

Requests regular staff to cancel their leaves

Srinagar, Dec 29: All regular employees of health department on Friday wore blank badge in solidarity with protesting National Health Mission (NHM) employees across state.

Pertinently, the black band protest was announced by President Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK), Dr Suhail Naik on Thursday when he addressed protesting NHM employees at Pratap Park.

Reiterating the importance of NHM employees who are now back bone of health sector and are working on meagre salaries from past decade, DAK has promised that it will not allow health sector to derail by doing internal arrangements of regular staff, but at the same will not

Kashmir's Grand Mosque remained locked for 18 Fridays in 2017

Prayers in Kashmir's grand Mosque allowed after three Weeks

Bilal Bashir Bhat

Srinagar, Dec 29: To offer congregational prayers, thousands of devotees on Friday thronged Kashmir's grand Mosque Srinagar which remained closed for continuous past three weeks due to the restrictions imposed by the government. The Masjid remained locked by the authorities for almost 18 Fridays during the year 2017 including on Juma-tul-Vida (the last



Friday of Ramadan). Pertinently, following the alleged lynching incident of senior

nagar on the occasion of Juma-tul-Vida (the last Friday of Ramadan), the first time in the living history of Kashmir.

Kashmir's chief cleric and chairman of the moderate faction of the Hurriyat Conference, Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, who usually delivers sermon before the Friday prayers, was also confined to his house on several occasions in 2017.

Much to the disappointment of thousands of devotees

RS 35.40 LAKH SANCTIONED IN FAVOUR OF 22 MILITANCY AFFECTED CASES

Srinagar, Dec 29: In a major significant Jammu and Kashmir government has sanctioned Rs 35.40 lakh in favour of 22 militancy affected cases in this north Kashmir district. Six appointment cases were cleared as well while Rs 8.50 lakh were sanctioned in favour of one property damage case.

He said Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Dr Nassir Ahmad Naqash chaired a meeting of District Level Screening Cum-Coordination Committee (DLSCC), here yesterday. Of the 29 cases, 22 cases were cleared and others deferred for want of clarification and permission for re-examination.

GOVT TO COVER ALL JK DISTRICTS UNDER RSBY: BALI BHAGAT

JAMMU, DECEMBER 29 – Minister for Health & Medical Education, Bali Bhagat informed that the government would cover all the districts of the state under prestigious Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY).

“With the implementation of the scheme in the remaining districts, the BPL families and senior citizens would also be able to avail the benefit of health insurance scheme,” the Minister informed, adding the scheme was initially launched by Government of India in two districts including Jammu and Srinagar in December 2011 on pilot basis.

The Minister was speaking during

a meeting convened to review the implementation of the scheme here.

He informed that the scheme was subsequently extended to ten more districts, five each in Kashmir and Jammu divisions. Later, the Government of India accorded approval for implementation of the scheme in all 22 districts of the State, he added.

The main objective of the scheme is to provide protection to the BPL families from the financial liabilities arising out of health ailments that involve hospitalization and other expenses.

Under the Yojana, the BPL families comprising five members shall be en-

titled to cashless hospitalization upto Rs. 30,000 per family per financial year. For senior citizens of these families, an additional coverage of Rs. 30,000 per senior citizen in the eligible family under Senior Citizens Health Insurance Scheme will also be available.

The Minister directed the Principal Secretary, Health & Medical Education to take immediate measures for speedy implementation of this important scheme to give succor to the poor families. He also called for arranging 10 per cent share of the state government for the premium amount as rest of 90 per cent share will be borne by the central gov-



ernment. This scheme would provide free of cost healthcare benefits in any public or private hospital across the country thus providing direct cash to the beneficiaries. Under the scheme, the Smart Card based on biometric technology system will be issued to the family to avoid any chance of duplication of service.

Principal Secretary Health & Medical Education, Dr. Pawan Kotwal, while informing about the latest status of the scheme, informed that there are about 6.70 lakh BPL families eligible under the scheme which will be registered under the scheme soon.

Among others present in the meeting included, Principal GMC, Jammu, Dr. Sunanda Raina, Director Family Welfare, J&K, Dr. Sameer Mattoo, Project Director, J&K AIDS Control Society, Dr. Mush-taq Ahmed Rather, Joint Director Planning, Madan Lal Bhagat and representatives of Government of India.

Continue from Front Page.....

CALM

allegedly involved in hawala trade, the proceeds of which were used for funding stone-pelting.

Several businessmen, especially those involved in cross-Line of Control trade between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir were investigated by the NIA.

It was an aborted political take off for Tassaduq, the cinematographer turned politician, who was fielded by the PDP from the Anantnag seat. However, his involvement with government and politics continued as in May he was appointed the coordinator in the Chief Minister's Grievance Cell, a post he gave up in early December.

Tassaduq was nominated as an MLC by his party, which was approved by the state Governor. Yesterday, he was inducted into the Mehbooba cabinet.

With the election dust settling down, few videos emerged on social networking sites depicting the security forces in poor light, which led to intense debate at national level on the tactics used by law enforcing agencies to deal with street protestors in Kashmir.

One of the videos showed a youth – who was going for a condolence gathering after casting his vote on 9 April – tied to the bonnet of a jeep by an army officer and paraded through over 20 villages as a human shield.

The incident prompted a former army general to say “Image of a ‘stone pelter’ tied in front of a jeep as a ‘human shield’, will for ever haunt the Indian Army & the nation!”.

The other major issue that remained in the limelight was the legal challenge to Article 35-A of the Constitution, which allows Jammu and Kashmir to retain a 1920s law passed by the then Maharaja of the state.

The residency law bars people from outside Jammu and Kashmir acquiring any immovable property in the state.

As the Supreme Court is set to deliver a verdict on the validity of the law, the separatists threatened to launch a mass agitation in case the act was struck down by the apex court.

The separatists allege that repealing the law would lead to the Centre changing the demography of the Muslim-majority state by creating settlements on the pattern done by Israel in Palestine.

One of the biggest moves by the Centre with regard to Jammu and Kashmir was appointment of former IB chief Dineshwar Sharma in October as its special representative for initiating a sustained dialogue with all stakeholders in the state.

While Sharma visited the state twice since his appointment, he has not been able to make any headway as far as bringing the separatists to the dialogue table is concerned.

On the social crime front, incidents of braid chopping created a fear psychosis in the valley as dozens of cases were reported from across the length and breadth of Kashmir.

Although similar incidents were reported from elsewhere in the country as early as first week of August, the first such incident was reported in Kashmir towards later September.

While police could not nab anyone involved in braid chopping incidents, it arrested several youth on the charges of inciting mobs on the pretext of protests against braid chopping.

However, these incidents came to an abrupt halt towards the end of October and seems to have quickly disappeared from public memory. (AGENCIES)

LPG

domestic and commercial purposes. The district authorities are aware of the illegal practice in the town but nothing concrete has been done so far. From LPG delivery vendors to roadside motor mechanics, LPG-fitted vehicle owners, dhaba's, hotels, restaurants and fast food joints, every other person is equipped with tools to refill the fuel.

“It is an irony that while a common man is not given a single cylinder, the dealers manage to get 10 to 15 cylinders,” Abdul Hameed, a consumer told Kashmir News Bureau . “Actual price of a gas cylinder is Rs 765, but black marketers sell it at exorbitant rates.”

“As people have no other option and there is no other alternative to the cooking purpose, they pay more,” he added.

The use of domestic gas for commercial purpose goes unabated in the city and no one is held accountable for it though it goes against the rules set by Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution.

“A good number of government offices in Anantnag are now using domestic gas cylinders for heating purpose,” Ghulam Hassan, a consumer told.

“Why the CAPD is not taking steps to prevent such misuse of the LPG,” he questioned.

Meanwhile sources from Dalgam, Kamad, Wanihama, Brinty, Pethabug Schichen, Larkipora and Vessu told to Kashmir News Bureau that one year back the Govt had announced the rate and subsidy of LPG cylinders of Rs 765 per cylinder in valley but the dealers violate the govt norms and charge Rs 860 per cylinder from consumers.

Sources added that these villages became the hub of Black Marketing but nothing has been done from the administration, they added.

However, a senior official in FDO told Kashmir scenario: “We have already told gas distributors to maintain record of every cylinder they receive from fuel companies,” he said. “Our officials are conducting random checks. The agencies should be able to furnish details during the checks. Failure to furnish details or those found with unaccounted for cylinders could face strong action,” added he.

Meanwhile we contacted to Assistant Director Food but his cell number was out of reach.

SOZ

Division referred to SSB in 2013, the SSB till 2015 has already issued Selection Lists comprising 3824 candidates which include 1240 in Jammu district, 719 in Kathua district, 774 in Rajouri district, 462 in Udhampur district, 233 in Samba district and 396 from Doda district respectively.

The spokesman explained that referral of vacancies at any level, including that of Teacher, is an ongoing process and in this regard the Administrative Department has recently received details of more vacancies from both the Directorates which have accrued from time-to-time and the department shall expedite consolidation so that these are also referred to SSB for filling up on a fast-track basis,” he explained.

Placing high priority on effective cadre management in the Department, the spokesman explained that the vacancies of Teachers accrue due to promotion, retirement on superannuation and death in harness and in no way can these district cadre posts be transferred from one district to another.

Clarifying that the Department has not created any new posts of Teacher in recent time, the Government Spokesman said that the State Cabinet has already approved up-gradation of 400 Government Schools in the State from middle to high and high to higher secondary level. “Once these 400 schools are upgraded as per norms, around 8000 additional posts of Teacher and Lecturer shall be created which would be distributed amongst all the districts in the State,” he added.

The spokesman also pointed out that standing instructions have been issued to both the Directors of School Education to fast-track holding of DPCs for promotion from Teacher to Master grade so that the accrued vacancies are filled up accordingly. “Both the Directorates have been advised to immediately hold DPCs to clear promotions so that all posts under direct recruitment quota in the School Education Department are referred to recruiting agencies,” he added.

DRABU

character and adopting democratic and transparent methods in future.

“It is so tragic that the Board failed to take notice that Islamic countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Turkey, Cyprus Tunisia, Algeria, Malaysia, Iran, Sri Lanka, Jordan, Indonesia, UAE, Qatar, Sudan, Morocco, Egypt, Iraq, Brunei had since declared triple divorce in one-go as un-Islamic,” he said.

Soz added that it is unfortunate that knowledgeable persons like Dr Tahir Mehmood, Salman Khurshed, Dr. Zafarul Islam Khan, Moosa Raza and Zeenat Showkat Ali have never been made members of the Board. “I have a feeling that the Board could have adopted this reformative measure, along with other needed reforms, at least, two decades earlier,” he said.

RASHEED

departments.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held regarding expenditure and liability position of various key departments including Housing & Urban Development, Higher Education, Power Development, R&B and School Education.

The meeting was informed that most of the departments have utilized 50 percent of the budgetary allocation for the current fiscal.

Addressing the administrative secretaries, Dr Drabu emphasized on strict implementation of budget directives to ensure expenditure upto 70 percent till 3rd quarter and rest 30 percent in the last quarter of the fiscal year. He asked the administrative secretaries to accelerate the utilization of resources allocated in the budget.

He asked the officers to adhere to the guidelines of the Finance Department and ensure that unnecessary liabilities are not created. He also asked for identification of core issues that lead to creation of liabilities.

“Expenditure management and monitoring system needs to be put in place while making expenditure,” Dr Drabu said adding that expenditure should be backed up with financial allocations to avoid unwarranted fiscal liabilities.

Under regular Capex budget in the State sector, the Government has released 42 percent upto November 2017 compared to the last year level of 28 percent, the meeting was informed.

It was agreed in the meeting that under Revised Estimates, allocation of cities and towns shall be enhanced by Rs 200 crore to be met from the savings of Rs 160 crore and another Rs 40 crore by exceeding the resources.

It was also agreed that for next year the allocation under regular Capex and State Share (Loan, CSS and PMDP) shall be maintained at Rs 5250 crore.

TOURISM

women have touched peak, rather focusing on up-liftment of women folk and restoring their honor and dignity, central Govt has preferred to give a bad name to Muslims and in the name of banning triple Talak found a way to interfere in their religious affairs and target them.

Er Rasheed reminded BJP that if it really cares about Muslims it should tell masses that do Muslims get justice in jobs at state and National level and what is the representation of Muslims in parties like BJP. “While Muslims in India are living a miserable life, to avoid its duties towards the minority community Modi led Govt. created hysteria among Muslim Women and got indulged in a character assassination campaign against the Sharia Laws. While BJP’s approach towards Muslims is known to all, Congress is now trying to follow soft Hindutva agenda just for its vote bank politics. Had not that been the case, congress would have opposed the bill tooth and nail,” he said.

He said that shamefully Farooq Abdullah and Muzaffar Hussain Beigh representing the only Muslim dominated state in the parliament kept criminal silence in the parliament to the extent as if they were dead bodies.” Rather lobbying against the bill both the regional parties proved to be like carriers of the shameful agenda,” he added.

Er Rasheed urged Muslim MP’s not to forget their duties towards the community and also appealed religious organizations to put things in right perspective by fighting against the passing of the bill at all possible forums.

He also accused some TV channels of indulging in the character assassination campaign against Muslims and dragging Quran and Sunah in the controversy by making unwanted comments which hurt every Muslim and deserve condemnation.

hit , thereby giving a great setback to the economy. The businessmen associated with tourism trade also blame negative portrayal of Kashmir by National media as among prominent reasons of downside.

Mudasir Muran, an eminent entrepreneur while talking to the Kashmir News Bureau stated – “ The tourism sector has not at all taken off this year due to continued uncertainty. The street protests coupled with heavy public unrest in 2008, 2010 , 2016 have adversely impacted the overall tourism growth. The reason for degrading of Kashmir’s tour-

MEET

priorities during the coming budget session, the meeting will deliberate upon the previous three visits of the GOI appointed envoy for JK, Dineshwar Sharma. The meet, as per sources, will also discuss the agendas of the government and recent decisions which include order related to government employees in which they were barred from speaking on political issues on social media, regularization of the daily wagers etc.

The meeting will be attended by minister for Revenue, Parliamentary Affairs, Haj & Auqaf Abdul Rahman Veeri, Members of Parliament Jugal Kishore, Thupstan Chewang and Shamsher Singh Manhas, besides Sartaj Madni, Dillawar Mir and Trilok Singh Bajwa of the PDP and Narinder Singh of the BJP.

The 10-member coordination committee of the PDP and BJP was tasked to ensure that the AoA is implemented within the defined time-frame and all the policy issues adhered to in letter and spirit.

The committee, which was tasked to meet at least once a month or on a need basis, had met earlier on November 21, this year.

TEACHER

who would normally offer Friday prayers, the huge deployment of forces deployed in the locality has become a routine practice of the government particularly aftermath the 2008 Shrine Board Agitation.

In 2016, after the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani the Grand Mosque (Jamia Masjid) remained locked for 19 weeks, it was the longest period after Maharaja Rule that Jamia Masjid was locked down.

Meanwhile, Mirwaiz today addressing a mammoth gathering at Jamia Masjid Srinagar hit out at the ruling regime for putting curbs in downtown and disallowing Friday prayers at Jama Mosque repeatedly and termed it as act of oppression and vendetta against the innocent people of downtown for their unflinching support for the movement. He said, however, these curbs were not going to break their resolve.

He said Rs 4 lakh each was sanctioned in eight cases against compensate employment. He said six appointment cases were cleared as well while Rs 8.50 lakh were sanctioned in favour of one property damage case.

The eligibility including qualification of the applicants was also taken into account while deciding the appointments cases. Rs 3 lakh sanctioned among three death cases.

Reports from Police, CID and Army were thoroughly discussed while deciding the cases. Meanwhile, re-verification and dependent certificates in some cases was sought during the meeting.

Ahmad Parray said, “The regularization process initiated by the government is a welcoming step and has brought relief to the families of thousands of casual and daily wagers.”

He said that the thousands of families of casual labours, daily wagers and others are thankful to the government especially Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti and Finance Minister Haseeb A Drabu for initiating the process of regularization. “It is just a beginning of the regularization. The process has just begun,” he quoted the government as saying.

“We met the government prior to the announcement and they assured us that all our demands will be fulfilled soon. They made agreement with us and said that all the demands will be fulfilled,” he said, adding that they also raised the query regarding the employees who lost their lives while working. “We will also take some favorable step form,” he quoted the government as saying.

He said that the government also assured them that those left out this time will also be added in their list soon. “The government also assured us that we will also be given the benefits at par with class IV employees,” Parray said.

The forum also thanked the government for initiating such process.

DAILY Editorial Time and Us SRINAGAR J&K

TESTING TIMES: ON THE BAD LOANS MENACE

The Central government has been working hard to address India's twin balance sheet problem, but it hasn't had much to show in the form of results. The Financial Stability Report released by the Reserve Bank of India, for one, suggests that India is still far away from solving the troubles ailing its banks and large business corporations. According to the report released last week, gross non-performing assets (NPAs) in the banking system as a whole rose to 10.2% at the end of September, from 9.6% at the end of March. This, according to a research report released by CARE Ratings, puts India fifth among significant economies with the most NPAs. The RBI stated further that it expects NPAs to continue to rise to as high as 11.1% of total outstanding loans by September 2018, so the end of the bad loans mess seems nowhere near. The bad loans problem has also not spared private sector banks – these lenders have seen their asset quality deteriorate at a faster pace than public sector banks. Private bank NPAs increased by almost 41%, as compared to 17% in the case of public sector banks at the end of September. Non-banking financial companies that compete against banks also saw a jump in NPAs. There are, however, some signs of hope as credit growth has begun to turn the corner and shown faster growth on a year-on-year basis when compared to March.

Reforms undertaken until now though may not be good enough to tackle the problem. The resolution of bankruptcy cases, particularly against large borrowers that contribute a major share of bank NPAs, under the new Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code should help bring the NPA situation under some control. In fact, despite its many imperfections and the slow pace of resolutions by the National Company Law Tribunal, the Code can be helpful in cleaning up bank books in future credit cycles. The recapitalisation of public sector banks too can help increase the capital cushion of banks and induce them to lend more and boost economic activity. But bad debt resolution and recapitalisation are only part of the solution as they, by themselves, can do very little to rein in reckless lending that has pushed the Indian banking system to its current sorry state. Unless there are systemic reforms that address the problem of unsustainable lending, future credit cycles will continue to stress the banking system. In this regard, the government will do well to consider the recent advice of the International Monetary Fund to reduce its ownership stake in banks and give greater powers to the RBI to regulate public sector banks efficiently. Structural reforms are the only long-term solution.

Listen to these four girls: on the Panapakkam suicides

► Krishna Kumar

In the case of girls, school-related anxieties get compounded by older, entrenched anxieties associated with gendering. Family and kinship fuel the apprehensions that girls internalise early childhood onwards about their matrimonial future. Educating a daughter is often perceived as an investment towards her marriage. The fear of being viewed as a poor performer at school adds to the stress at home. Teachers usually have scant awareness of a student's state of mind. When they ask students to bring parents to school, they assume this will create additional pressure to encourage harder work. This simplistic logic carries great risk, as the Panapakkam incident shows.

Panapakkam is a rural town in Tamil Nadu's Vellore district. Last month, it was in the news when four adolescent girls disappeared from their school, leaving their bags behind. Their shoes were later found beside a sizeable well into which they had apparently jumped in order to end their lives. They were students of Class XI. This is precisely the grade level at which a vast number of India's adolescents feel seriously unhappy and resentful. If you consult a typical textbook on adolescent psychology, you will find such emotions to be common. The text will probably dwell on identity, self-worth and petulance. Teachers are taught about these common symptoms, and those who learn them well enough to discuss them correctly get through their B.Ed. (Bachelor of Education) examination without much cramming. When they become teachers, they soon realise that passing the B.Ed. examination is a lot easier than dealing with real adolescents – boys or girls.

A poor record The Panapakkam girls are reported to have been scolded by a teacher for their poor academic performance and told to call their parents. The girls decided to avoid that ordeal and embraced death instead, thereby displaying another familiar characteristic of the adolescent mind, namely, its preference for camaraderie in taking a decision.

As a nation, our record of dealing with adolescents is rather poor. To be an adolescent means that you don't feel comfortable with what all is going on around you, but older people don't find it easy to deal with you. This is partly because adolescent behaviour is often prickly and petulant. The larger reason, however, is that adolescents live in an ideal world and measure everyone, including parents and teachers, by their utopian standards. This is not merely an emotional response to an imperfect world; it is also proof of their fully developed logical capacity. By defying the adults surrounding them, adolescents develop their own identity as individuals. This is not easy, so they depend on their peers to plan and decide. Their private fantasies are mostly benign and transformative. We can say that adolescent dreams represent a nation's wealth. In India, this wealth is mostly burnt up in preparation for examinations.

Ignoring or oppressing adolescents is not uncommon in other countries, but India's case is somewhat extreme. Over more than a century, our system of schooling has honed its tools to oppress and defeat the adolescent. The tool used to



subdue the rebellious adolescent mind is the Board examination. The term 'board' has acquired connotations of terror for the young on account of the darkness into which it pushes them before some are let back out into normal light and further education. Boards of examinations maintain a tight secrecy over how a young student will be marked and declared either 'pass' or 'fail'. Social history is rife with instances of unwarranted failure and opprobrium of family seniors.

The matriculation examination is part of family lore in every part of India. Fear of failing in it and thereby closing all doors to a worthwhile future figures in many autobiographies written during the colonial period. Examination mania is instilled into the young mind from the start of primary schooling. Popular understanding of education, which is widely shared in political and official circles, equates learning with performance on tests. The nationwide industry that specialises in offering help in passing examinations and entrance tests makes no distinction between cramming, cheating and learning. The Class X examination continues to 'fail' millions every summer.

The Class XI hurdle If an adolescent successfully survives the Class X examination, his or her ordeal enters a more complicated phase, involving choice of subjects for the higher secondary examination. The Panapakkam girls who chose to end their lives were studying in Class XI. We do not know how they individually came to choose the subjects to study in this fateful class. For a vast majority of students moving into Class XI, the choice of elective subjects is made by their parents or senior siblings and teachers. Subjects are seen as tickets to the future. Some are regarded as solid tickets for a coveted future while others are seen as bogus tickets, carrying the risk of life-long stagnation. These are, of course, stereotypes, but they persist as currency of practical wis-

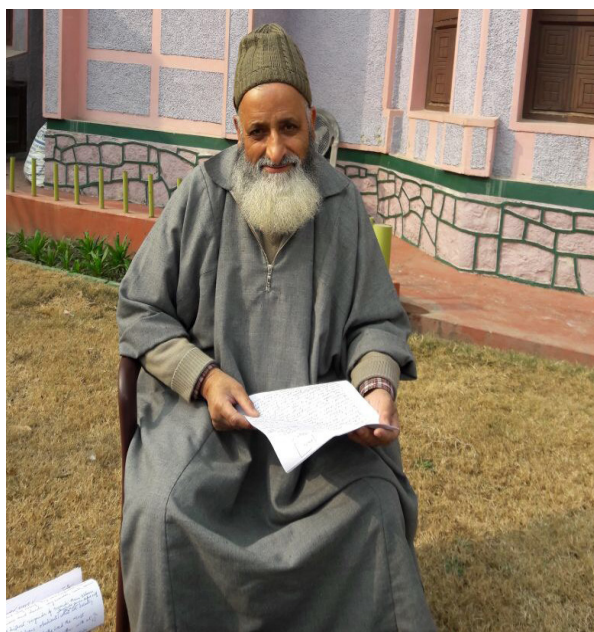
dom in a blind market controlled by Boards. No principal, teacher or parent dares to demand openness from a Board about its procedures. A tight cover of confidentiality is maintained to conceal the abysmal quality of the marking system, question papers and the evaluation process.

In the case of girls, school-related anxieties get compounded by older, entrenched anxieties associated with gendering. Family and kinship fuel the apprehensions that girls internalise early childhood onwards about their matrimonial future. Educating a daughter is often perceived as an investment towards her marriage. The fear of being viewed as a poor performer at school adds to the stress at home. Teachers usually have scant awareness of a student's state of mind. When they ask students to bring parents to school, they assume this will create additional pressure to encourage harder work. This simplistic logic carries great risk, as the Panapakkam incident shows.

Assessing the Boards The state of education being what it is at present, it is unlikely that the voices drowned in the well at Panapakkam will be heard, but an effort must be made to do so. Boards responsible for the examination industry must realise that that it is no longer useful to install helplines to provide just-in-time advice for a 16-year-old in despair. The entire Board examination system and the culture associated with it constitute an endemic problem.

Plenty of ideas for reforming the Boards and the examination system they govern have been given over the years. Some of these ideas have been put into practice here and there, as isolated steps lacking a wider frame of reference to curricular reform. The National Curriculum Framework, 2005 insisted on coherence between reforms in curriculum, examinations and teacher training. This perspective continues to pose a challenge to an institutional structure marked by rivalry and turf wars.

OH- But Do You Know Your Nose?



► Abdul Hameed Dar Dy. General Manager (RDT) JKTDCC

Well human as well as animal kingdom etc have a nose. So do but strangely I realized its importance only when I am virtually at the sun set of my life few days back I developed a technical swag small Boil in side my Nose nil (Punlyan E.N.T problem) and the tip of my Nose become red hot and assumed the color of the a red cherry. Its natural through out my life or as a human weak-

ness. We see and have a look into a mirror (Looking Glass) as how do we look like and this poor Nose of ours is always their and acts as a buffer zone of our face. As she does not mind in what context to our reference to context as how we in our local Kashmiri language call it. I mean if its (Gerett tee chevett) nicely shaped its taken as a "Shoob dar Nuss". If small in size its "Mekkness". The small one if pointed totull ness. If having curve totee ness (The nose of pigeon) If volomous in sixe (Bekkee ness) or god forbid having history geography of a monkey shape nose (Then its penzess ness) etc. But like an ant its always busy. Inhaling oxygen an exhaling carbon dioxide the CO2 so its virtually. "The Chumney of our life" or a germ free AIRWASH passage as it confronts and acts as a speed breaker and arrests the dust particles and acts as a speed breaker arrests the dust particles as people or person with or without ourv an addharcard and are stoped their and then by its icons The Hair Follicals. Now about its forbiance see you twist it around it will obey your command you choke its nosenils passages. She bears the in justices and high handness like which is mostly prevalent in the globe based on colour , creed, religion , misht is right dominance, suppression, oppression threat and indimention horror, terror etc or a tunnul / passage to stimulate our mind and mood by the fragrance of the flowers, or by the aroma of the delicious food, your realize a site as it's a acts as a sensor just have a look around when we stand invited at a marriage party for meal. Before the meal service you will find most of the invitee for no fault of her start playing with their noses. Just To Kill The Time Before The Time Kill Us. And some discum what not from AAJ KE TAZA KEBER TO KABRESTAN". But mind it at that point of time our mind is in need and on the level of an expectation or in sub in NEFFESS KE AVAREE GERDEE and contrary going against the

sermon of Sheik Noor Din.

Neffers sum kernnem – eddel tee veedel Neffers monee shattamus beddel avee.

And we cursing the host for the delayed meal service while the poor host cursing his luck for the late arrival of the guests but in both the cases our hands are still on our Nuss The nose But who cares. Once the meal is served this poor in jured / mallined nose quietly sends her signals to the brain and our brain declares the operations stimulates our appetite, directs the stomach to be ready for the meal land slide and its road clearing operation visaviz our desertion of the meal and the extra once of energy we got after this haffety meal for setting for a while the poor people oe the persons globally who does not have a masal to eat / femiane sticken / ruffuges of the conflict zones etc. Now the second part which is very vital is "To Know" viza viz the tittle of the write up we should have learned or know about the hand reality of life as to what for we have come to this world what role we towards the allah TVT and towards our B2o then society and in humanity in general to make this world an abode of peace / love Passion and happiness or to undertake or do a cocicour rehersal etc and tred on the path of surrat it musteekem (The path of risht fullness) etc. Let us come back to our nose. This nose of our is virtually a thermometer of our life because once we lose our breath we are declared dead as virtually the shah the breath or the shah the king is now more their with us thus this shaheen shah queen is the trisser of our life. Be loyal toit and feel its gmpertance or god forbid we will be completely lost in the wilder ness (again ness) of this world as "Deemes" seet chayee ieh dem darree

"Deem Tellee foree- khya"

(The existence is depend on your breath once you lose the same what will you witter or say.)

Now the other aspect of this nose business id if its taken as a compliment what we locally call as (Ness Teven) meaning she or he kept our honour or reverse of as (Ness Teven) chopped on nose or as a boimeness (a soul which is having a drawn face, or is irritable or / toffee) the (Khen ness) The running nose and touch wood the most dread full among them being the (NESS REKH) of our child hood days once our parents / serious / or teachers used us to rub our nose on a mud plustured wall / or floor, and we used to rub our tender lolly nose so hard so that it could form a reach (a line). So that we will not repeat our mischief , wrong doing or show any causal ness in our studies etc so this nose of what ever shape or size was used as a deterrent as does our world super power do with their show of neculer military mist animal and what KHOT to dominate the other countries to be know as super powers forgetting for a while that its allah TVT who is the supreme or the ultimate power authority / of the lord of the lords. My dear nose, these are some of the freacational duties / quallh I have pondered upon of your for rest let the others do to arise as how dutiful on are and in a knowledge ment of your service this is the compliment I can done to pass on you as khoderet naa bennya how gaa ferseet mee toojee mere yaar so keep breathing and living.

(Article pledged With all my blessing to my very beloved ones Mr. Shamim Indarabi and to Mir Murtazza who recently entered into a matrimonial knot)



Exercising twice a week may improve cognition, memory in elderly

Previously conducted numerous studies have shown solid evidence of how regular exercise in any form can contribute towards treating a plethora of health issues.

Numerous studies conducted earlier have often associated physical activity with improved memory, cognition abilities, and overall brain health.

Now, new guidelines released by the American Academy of Neurology suggest that exercising twice a week may improve thinking abil-

ity and memory in people with mild cognitive impairment (MCI).

Worldwide, more than six percent of people in their 60s and over 37 percent of people aged 85 or above have MCI. The level of exertion should be enough to work up a bit of a sweat but doesn't need to be so rigorous that you can't hold a conversation. "Regular physical exercise has long been shown to have heart health benefits, and now we can say exercise also may help improve memory for people

with mild cognitive impairment," said lead author Ronald C. Petersen, MD at the Mayo Clinic – a US-based healthcare non-profit.

"What's good for your heart can be good for your brain," Petersen added. MCI is a medical condition that becomes common with aging. While it is linked to problems with thinking ability and memory, it is not the same as dementia. People with MCI have milder symptoms.

People with MCI may struggle to complete complex tasks or have

difficulty understanding the information they have read, whereas people with dementia have trouble with daily tasks, such as dressing, bathing, and eating.

However, there is strong evidence that MCI can lead to dementia. Thus, doctors should recommend that people with MCI exercise regularly as part of an overall approach to managing their symptoms, the guideline said. "Exercising might slow down the rate at which you would progress from mild cognitive

impairment to dementia," Petersen said. While doctors may recommend cognitive training for people with MCI, there is weak evidence that the training may be beneficial in improving measures of cognitive function. The guidelines, published in the journal *Neurology*, were developed after reviewing studies for six-months, which showed that bi-weekly workouts may help people with mild cognitive impairment as part of an overall approach to managing their symptoms.

Eating probiotics likely to help prevent depression

Besides keeping your gut healthy, consuming a diet rich in probiotics -- also called as "good" or "helpful" bacteria -- may help protect against depression, finds a mice study. Probiotics are live bacteria and yeasts that are good for health, especially the digestive system.

The findings showed that rats which lived solely on the fatty diet were found to develop behaviour similar to depression, while the rats receiving the probiotics-enriched drinking water remained neutral in their behaviour.

Further, the rats that did not receive probiotics had an increased number of white blood cells in their brain tissue, which can be a sign of chronic inflammation, and is also seen in the fatty tissues and livers of overweight people and diabetics.

Conversely, these cells were found decreased in the brains of the rats with probiotics in their drinking water.

"This may indicate that one of the things the probiotics do is work to reprogramme the immune system. In this study, the rats offset the consequences of the fatty diet with the help of probiotics, so that they were on par with their peers in the control group," Anders Abildgaard, researcher at the Aarhus University in Denmark.

"This is a fascinating discovery that supports the conclusion that probiotics, which primarily work in the intestines, also affect the brain. That makes the result interesting for the treatment of depression," Abildgaard added.

In the study, published in the journal *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity*, the rats were divided into groups and were fed an extra fatty and fibreless diet, while the other group drank water with probiotics.

After 12 weeks, the researchers observed that the rats on the fatty compound feed without probiotics behaved more depressively when they were given a swimming test.

Although it is difficult to say whether the results can be transferred to people with depression, it is possible to imagine some of the people who suffer from depression benefiting from probiotics, Abildgaard said.



Organs printed from bio-ink closer to reality

Scientists have developed a way to print stable biological structures using 'bio-ink', an advance that may some day lead to printed human organ replacements. Before any real applications, "bioprinting" still faces many technical challenges.

Processing the bio-ink and making it stick to itself and hold the desired printed gel structure have been proving particularly difficult especially in inkjet printing. Few methods currently exist for gluing bio-ink droplets together and these do not work for every kind of cell, motivating new alternative approaches. Building on their previous work, researchers at Osaka University in Japan have now refined an enzyme-driven approach to sticking biological ink droplets together, enabling complex biological structures to be printed. "Printing any kind of tissue structure is a complex process.

The bio-ink must have low enough viscosity to flow through the inkjet printer, but also needs to rapidly form a highly viscous gel-like structure when printed," said Shinji Sakai, from Osaka University. "Our new approach meets these requirements while avoiding sodium alginate.

In fact, the polymer we used offers excellent potential for tailoring the scaffold material for specific purposes," said Sakai, lead author of the study published in the journal *Macromolecular Rapid Communications*.

Currently, sodium alginate is the main gelling agent used for inkjet bioprinting, but has some compatibility problems with certain cell types.

The researchers' new approach is based on hydrogelation mediated by an enzyme, horseradish peroxidase, which can create cross-links between phenyl groups of an added polymer in the presence of the oxidant hydrogen peroxide.

Although hydrogen peroxide itself can also damage cells, the researchers carefully tuned the delivery of cells and hydrogen peroxide in separate droplets to limit their contact and keep the cells alive.

More than 90 per cent of the cells were viable in biological test gels prepared in this way.

A number of complex test structures could also be grown from different types of cells.

"Advances in induced pluripotent stem cell technologies have made it possible for us to induce stem cells to differentiate in many different ways," said Makoto Nakamura, from Osaka University.

"Now we need new scaffolds so we can print and support these cells to move closer to achieving full 3D printing of functional tissues.

Our new approach is highly versatile and should help all groups working to this goal," Nakamura said.

Who needs weighing scales? Your body's in-built weight sensor can help combat obesity



Obesity is one of the biggest health problems at present, that is rapidly becoming a part of everyone's life. The rising number of obese people around the world just goes to show how we are allowing a particular lifestyle to dictate us into an unhealthy state of being.

Obesity is also a trigger for many other health problems like diabetes, hypertension and hormonal disorders. Monitoring your body weight to maintain normalcy is important in this regard and it appears, you don't really need a weighing scale to do it. Researchers have found that there is a weight sensing system within your own body that operates like bathroom scales, registering body weight and signaling the brain to reduce food intake. The system, which regulates weight gain by calculating body weight and fat mass, could lead to a better understanding of the causes of obesity as well as new anti-obesity drugs.

The results also explain why several studies have coupled

sitting habit with obesity and bad health. It is because the "internal body scales give an inaccurately low measure when you sit down. As a result you eat more and gain weight," the researchers said. "We have found support for the existence of internal bathroom scales. The weight of the body is registered in the lower extremities. If the body weight tends to increase, a signal is sent to the brain to decrease food intake and keep the body weight constant," said John-Olov Jansson, Professor at Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg in Sweden. Further, the results demonstrate that the weight sensing system regulates fat mass independently of leptin – a weight loss hormone. It is possible that leptin combined with activation of the internal body scales can become an effective treatment for obesity, the researchers said. For the study, published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*, the team performed experiments on obese rodents that were made artificially heavier by loading with extra weights.

The animals lost almost as much weight as the artificial load. The extra weights caused body fat to decrease and blood glucose levels to improve. Worried about tucking into a bit too many calories? Do you often find yourself standing on a weighing scale and keeping a track of each added pound? What if we tell you, that our body has an in-built weighing scale that can monitor fat and signal the brain when there is an overdose? Yes you heard us. A group of researchers have found a previously unidentified body fat regula-

tory system. After sensing excessive body weight, this mechanism just like bathroom scales, signals the brain to reduce food intake too.

According to a latest study published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* there is an inbuilt weighing scale in the body, and more knowledge about the sensing mechanism could lead to a better understanding of the causes of obesity. The researchers explained, that they have found the support for the existence of internal bathroom scales. The weight of the body is registered in the lower extremities. If the body weight tends to increase, a signal is sent to the brain to decrease food intake and keep the body weight constant. For the study, the researchers analysed obese rodents that were made artificially heavier by loading with extra weights. The animals lost almost as much weight as the artificial load. The extra weights caused body fat to decrease and blood glucose levels to improve. In the course of the study, the scientists also discovered a previously undiscovered mechanism that operates to regulate fat mass entirely independently of leptin. The mechanism that the scientists have now identified regulates body fat mass independently of leptin, and it's possible that leptin combined with activation of the internal body scales can become an effective treatment for obesity. The mechanism could explain well the frequently observed correlation between the time a person spends sitting and increases in metabolic diseases such as obesity and diabetes.

Scientists identify the root of nicotine addiction, may lead to new treatments

Scientists have identified specific chemical changes deep in the brain that help drive nicotine addiction, an advance that may lead to new treatments for the condition.

In the research published in the journal *PNAS*, scientists were able to halt these changes in mice and discover potential targets for drugs to treat tobacco dependence.

Nicotine is a stimulant that works by binding to receptors widely distributed throughout the brain, causing neurons to release a variety of neurotransmitters including do-

pamine, which triggers feelings of pleasure.

In a search for the brain cells that transmit this response, researchers at the Rockefeller University in the US investigated how nicotine affects two midbrain structures, the interpeduncular nucleus (IPN) and the medial habenula (MHb).

While these brain regions are ancient in evolutionary terms and are found in all vertebrates, including humans, they have not received much attention from scientists until recently, researchers said.

Working with mice, Jessica L Ables, first author of the study, found that chronic nicotine consumption alters the functions of a particular population of neurons inside the IPN. These altered brain cells, which she dubbed Amigo1, appear to promote nicotine addiction by disrupting the communication between the habenula and the IPN.

Normally, these brain structures have a system in place to curtail nicotine addiction.

The habenula responds to a given dose of nicotine by sending an aversion signal to the IPN that decreases the reward of the drug,

an effect that ultimately limits the urge to consume nicotine.

After chronic exposure to nicotine, however - the mice used in the study drank nicotine-laced water for six weeks - the Amigo1 cells compromise this "braking effect" by releasing two chemicals that reduce the response of the IPN to the aversion signal from the habenula. In other words, the stop-smoking message does not get delivered.

The result is a "pro-addiction" response to nicotine, which the mice displayed in a

behavioural test designed to measure the motivational properties of the drug.

In the test, called conditioned place preference, the mice chose to spend time in a chamber where they had previously received nicotine. "If you are exposed to nicotine over a long period you produce more of the signal-disrupting chemicals and this desensitises you. That is why smokers keep smoking," said Ines Ibanez-Tallon, a scientist in the lab of Nathaniel Heintz, a professor at the Rockefeller University.



Pollard skips NZ Twenty20s for personal reasons

NELSON: The West Indies have suffered a further setback on their New Zealand tour on Thursday with team officials confirming premier all-rounder Kieron Pollard had pulled out of the Twenty20 matches for 'personal reasons'.

It is the second change for the tourists, who have already had to replace the injured Ronsford Beaton.

The West Indies have yet to win a match in New Zealand, having lost both Tests inside four days and been comprehensively outplayed in the three one-day internationals.

"Left-handed batsman Shimron Hetmyer will replace all-rounder Kieron Pollard, who is unavailable due to personal reasons," Cricket West Indies said in a statement.

"Left-arm fast bowler Sheldon Cottrell will replace pacer Ronsford Beaton, who has been forced to return home with a side strain."

However, despite New Zealand dominating the Tests and ODIs, head coach Mike



Hesson expected the West Indies to provide tough opposition in the Twenty20s, the format in which they are world champions.

"They're certainly an exciting batting line-up, some middle order players who've obviously done pretty well in the IPL and the likes of [Samuel] Badree coming to the T20 gives plenty of experience in that bowling group," Hesson said.

"They're certainly a challenge for us."

Tim Southee will captain the New Zealand

side in place of Kane Williamson who is being rested for the first game of the three-match series at Saxton Oval in Nelson on Friday.

The remaining fixtures are scheduled to be played in Mount Maunganui.

Cristiano Ronaldo named Globe Soccer's Best Player for the second year in a row

Real Madrid star Cristiano Ronaldo has been named Globe Soccer's Best Player for the second year in a row and the fourth time overall although he wasn't present in person to receive his trophy.

The Portuguese international also won the prize, organised by the EFAA (European Association of Football Agents) and ECA (European Clubs Association) in 2011, 2014 and 2016.

Ronaldo appeared by video link as he received the award from Italy's Alessandro del Piero.

Despite his numerous awards, Ronaldo joked that he still has plenty of room to expand his personal trophy cabinet.

"Don't worry my friend, I have a lot of space," Ronaldo, who inspired



Real to the Champions League last season, told the show's host yesterday.

"For me it's a special moment and

I feel very happy to receive this award. I have to say thank you to my teammates, to my coach, to Real Madrid.

"It was an amazing year, we won a lot of trophies collective and myself individual, so I'm so glad. Thank you for the people who voted for me -- next year, do the same!"

Real were also named best club of the year and Zinedine Zidane was best coach.

"It's an honour for me and for the club to receive this award," Zidane told the audience.

"It means things have gone well and worked well."

In other awards, Francesco Totti and Carles Puyol received player career awards, Marcello Lippi was handed a coaching career award, Spain's La Liga was best league of the year, and Jorge Mendes named best agent.

Glenn Maxwell not giving up on Test recall, says has 'unfinished business' with Australia

Overlooked batsman Glenn Maxwell has not given up on a Test recall, insisting he has unfinished business with Australia.

Despite his stellar Sheffield Shield form, Maxwell has been forced to watch the Ashes from the stands as selectors opted for Shaun and Mitchell Marsh on two occasions.

Twitter Ads info and privacy Maxwell — who was axed for the Ashes opener against England in Brisbane in favour of Shaun Marsh — has scored 590 runs in five matches for Victoria this season, including a stunning 278, at an average of 73.75.



It has not been enough to win over selectors for the four matches so far, but the dynamic 29-year-old remains hopeful of adding to his seven Tests.

"I think I've got a lot of unfinished business with the Baggy Green," Maxwell told the ABC's Grandstand. "I think I've made some big improvements this year with my technique and the way I've batted. We've had a long run of Shield cricket where I could actually concentrate on what I need to do. It's been nice to be able to concentrate on trying to get better, I was able to go away and change some things technically and mentally to get ready for the Shield season."

At Test level, Maxwell has recorded 339 runs at an average of 26.07 — with his 104 against India in March his highest score.

Ball-tampering accusation on Anderson a media mischief: England coach

England coach Trevor Bayliss on Friday rejected accusations that pacer James Anderson indulged in ball-tampering on the penultimate day of the fourth Ashes Test against Australia after footage emerged of him appearing to scratch the shiny side of the ball, reported BT Sport.

The incident was spotted in real-time by Channel Nine commentary panel, with cricketer-turned-pundit Shane Warne saying: "I'm not sure you are allowed to use your fingernail there" before his co-commentator Michael Slater adding: "That's interesting, you can't get your nail into the ball. That's a no-no." More Baggy Green legends soon joined in on the act, with former pacer Mitchell Johnson questioning how the 'ball [was] reversing under 10 overs' and Mike Hussey opining that Anderson may have some explaining to do to match referee Ranjan Madugalle.



But the quartet's accusation was dismissed by an ICC spokesperson, vindicating Anderson, although Bayliss remains peeved over the incident, which he dubbed routine 'pommie-bashing' by the Australian media.

"We've had a good couple of days and there was no too much positive press for them, so it was a bit of pommie-bashing I suppose," said Bayliss.

"But we are used to that. We knew when we came out it was going to be 24 million versus 11, and we just have to laugh it off."

Regarding the incident itself, the tourists' coach said Anderson was merely trying to clean the ball — an understanding he says the umpires even shared.

"As soon as I saw it during the rain break, I went to the

umpires to find out what was going on," Bayliss said in an interview with BT Sport. "And in their words it was a beat-up. You're allowed to clean the ball and that's what we were doing. There was no problem at all, they said."

England have so far had a disastrous Ashes series, losing all three Tests, with the ongoing fourth one heading towards a draw.

'England selectors would have been entitled to drop me'

MELBOURNE: Alastair Cook said selectors would have been entitled to drop him over his poor form — before his masterful double-century put England in a winning position in the fourth Ashes Test.

The unflappable opening batsman crushed Australia's hopes of sweeping the five-Test series with an unbeaten 244 on Thursday to put the tourists 164 runs ahead of Australia with two days left.

The Ashes are already gone after England lost the opening three Tests, with Cook contributing just 83 runs in six innings. But he made at least partial amends with his towering double-century.

Cook, 33, said he would have understood being dropped, but he bounced back in the Boxing Day Test to present his team with a chance of victory.

"They would have been entitled just because I literally hadn't scored a run since Edgbaston," Cook said, refer-



ring to his 243 against the West Indies in August. "I always feel I've got the backing of the selectors but you've still got to deliver the goods, I hadn't done that on this tour. It was very frustrating."

Cook's fifth double-century also catapulted him above West Indian Brian Lara to become the sixth highest run-getter in Test cricket with 11,956.

"I've doubted myself for 12 years and I'll probably continue to doubt myself but obviously the longer it goes the harder it becomes.

"But I suppose that's why I can be quite proud of going to the well again and delivering a performance like that was pleasing."

"It's just a shame it's three or four weeks too late, I'll have to live with that for a long time but it's nice to score a few."

The former captain, 33, said he had been working hard in the nets to recapture form and felt he had re-discovered his scoring rhythm.

"I've always worked hard on my whole game and my approach to cricket, so unfortunately most of my runs are

pretty ugly runs and quite hard work, that hasn't changed throughout my whole career," he said. "Obviously, with my batting over a period of time, there are quite a few moving parts to it. When they're not quite in sync it can be quite frustrating."

Cook said he had been given great support by the England team during his barren run before posting his 32nd Test century in his 151st Test match.

"The feeling when I walked into the change room last night was very special, and obviously very special as well," he said.

"The team has been fantastic. Obviously, we've had an interesting journey on this tour with a lot of things going on."

"But we've stuck together really well as a side and as a group of players and we've put in three good days of performance here and let's hope we can do the same on day four tomorrow."

West Indies rue Kesrick Williams' expensive over after loss against New Zealand

The West Indies were left rueing one bad over by Kesrick Williams after being trounced by New Zealand in the opening Twenty20 game in Nelson on Friday.

Set a target of 188 to win, the reigning world champions suffered a batting meltdown after star opener Chris Gayle fell cheaply for 12 and were eventually all out for 140 in the 19th over.

But captain Carlos Brathwaite said the real damage was done in New Zealand's final over when Mitchell Santner and Tim Southee plundered 25 off Williams in a wild over that included three no balls.

"For the first 19 overs we bowled as good as we did. But it happens. Kesrick Williams has been the best bowler in the world this calendar year and he just went awry," Brathwaite said.

"It wasn't even a bad day, just one bad over and that gave them some momentum going into our innings and we never really got that big over."

"But credit to them (New Zealand). Sometimes you have to give credit to the opposition. They bowled with discipline and they fielded really well."

Southee (10 not out), who partnered Santner (23 not out) in the final over run spree, acknowledged that New Zealand needed the bonus runs after struggling to 162 for seven after 19 overs.

"We struggled early on with the bat but the guys hung in there and were able to finish really strongly and then the way we fielded and bowled was exceptional," said Southee with Colin Munro (53) and Glenn Phillips (56), producing the only innings



of note. "The West Indies bowled well

throughout and we scrapped our way to a reasonable total and then

put the icing on the top with that last over."

Debutant Seth Rance sparked the West Indies batting capitula-

tion when he bagged the prized scalp of Gayle and Chadwick Walton (seven) with successive deliveries.

It left the West Indies at two for 19 and they never recovered from the initial setback.

After 16 overs they were 103 for eight when a late slog by Jerome Taylor (20) and Ashley Nurse (not out 20) produced 28 off 12 balls before Rance came back for his final over to end the West Indies innings with six balls to spare.

Rance returned the impressive figures of three for 30, while Southee took three for 36.

It continued a miserable tour for the West Indies, who were comprehensively outplayed in the two Tests and three one-day internationals earlier in the month.

The second match in the series is at Mount Maunganui on Monday.