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● DECEMBER, 10, 2017
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WEATHER TEMPERATURE

STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE		MIN TEMPERATURE	
	ACT		ACT	
SRINAGAR	11.2		-0.2	
JAMMU	22.8		8.7	
LEH	10.5		-13.0	
KARGIL	9.9		-8.4	

SUNSET SUNDAY:
05:23 PM
SUNRISE MONDAY:
07:28 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
Generally Cloudy sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 12°C & 01°C respectively.

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

STATE | 3

CHIEF SECRETARY REVIEWS PROGRESS OF LAND ACQUISITION IN PMDP PROJECTS

INTERSTATE | 5

GUJARAT POLLS: EVM ISSUES HAVE BEEN RESOLVED, SAYS BHAVNAGAR DC

BUSINESS | 7

NO LEGISLATION ENFORCED TO TACKLE STRESS OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS: JAITLEY

SPORTS | 8

MOHAMMAD AMIR'S CHOICES SHOULD BE WORTHY OF HIS CLASS

CM on 3-day tour of Chenab region, convenes grievances redressal camp at Kishtwar

Announces release of Rs 30 lacs for Gulabgarh WSS; Rs 10 lacs each for refurbishing Court Complex, developing Kalamasar road

KISHTWAR, DECEMBER 09: Extending her public outreach programme to Chenab region, Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti today reached here on a three-day tour of the region and to convene public grievances redressal camps at Kishtwar and Doda.

In the first leg, the Chief Minister convened a public grievances redressal camp here today. During the day long camp, the Chief Minister listened to the problems of people of extremely far flung and cut off areas of the district.

Minister of State for Transport, Sunil Sharma; legislators and ex-legislators of the district were present on the occasion.

Mainly the demands put for included start of work on the Vailoo-Singhpura tunnel, setting up of a skill development institute for training manpower for the upcoming power



projects in the region, establishment of a women's college in the town and early completion of Naigarh water supply scheme.

Several deputations from the town demanded construction of circular

road in the town, addressing the drinking water needs of the area by early augmentation of Naigarh water supply scheme, setting up of a juvenile home and construction of an

► See CM...Pg 02

WEATHER FORECAST: MEHBOOBA DIRECTS KMR DIVISIONAL ADMN TO BE IN A STATE OF PREPAREDNESS

Directs field Deptts. to deploy men, machinery at critical spots before hand

Jammu, Dec 09: In view of weather forecast of heavy snow and rains, Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti today directed Divisional Administration of Kashmir to be in a state of preparedness and responsive to any crisis thrown up by the inclement weather.

The Chief Minister has directed all the concerned Departments like

► See Weather...Pg 02

Congress is asking who my father, mother are: Modi

Gandhinagar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi continued with his attack on the Congress party on Saturday, this time saying that the party was asking who Modi's mother and father are.

Addressing a campaign rally on the first phase polling day, Modi quoted a Congress worker, Salman Nizami, as questioning his ancestry.

Modi, campaigning for the BJP for the second phase of polls, addressing a large gathering in Lunawada, said: "Congress is



asking who is my father and mother. I ask

► See Modi...Pg 02

TASSADUQ MUFTI ADVOCATES CREATION OF ECOSYSTEM OF INNOVATION IN JK

Srinagar, Dec 9: In order to formulate a roadmap in bringing J&K state into the innovation and technology map of India, Coordinator Chief Minister's Grievance Cell, Tassaduq Hussain Mufti facilitated a meeting with the officials of CIPAM (Cell for IPR promotion and Innovation) from Union Ministry of Industries and Commerce in the office of Grievance Cell here today.

The meeting was a step towards creating an ecosystem of innovation and technology in the state. It was decided to establish exclusive IPR cells in different universities,

RESTRICTIONS TO BE IMPOSED IN SRINAGAR AREAS ON TODAY: OFFICIALS

JRL had called for shutdown, protest

Srinagar, Dec 09: In view of the shutdown and protest call given by the Joint Resistance leadership, the district administration Srinagar on Saturday decided to impose restrictions Srinagar areas falling under the jurisdiction of nine Police Stations.

An official in the district administration told KNS that the restrictions under section 144 CrPc will be imposed in Srinagar areas falling under the jurisdiction of nine Police Stations.

"Areas falling under strict restrictions include Rainawari, Nowhatta, Khanyar, M.R.Gunj, Safakadal and Maisuma while the areas falling under three Police Stations including Kralkhud, Kothibagh and R.M.Bagh will remain under restrictions partially," he said.

He said that the restrictions will be imposed as a precautionary measure. Earlier, the JRL comprising of Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Muhammad Yasin Malik had called for a complete shutdown on Sunday in view of the World Human Rights Day.

► See Imposed...Pg 02

EC MUST ADDRESS QUERIES RELATED TO WORKING OF EVMs: OMAR

Srinagar: Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today asked the Election Commission to address the queries being raised on the trustworthiness of the electronic voting machines (EVMs).

"I've been extremely sceptical of EVM related conspiracy theories but I'm beginning to question my unwavering faith in the machines & their infallibility," Abdullah wrote in a Twitter post.

► See Omar...Pg 02

Congress leader questions Govt.'s move of freeing stone pelters in Valley

Wants Amnesty for Jammu youth held during Amarnath land row

Srinagar, Dec 09: Senior Congress leader and former minister Sham Lal Sharma on Saturday castigated the government over giving amnesty to stone pelters in Kashmir, accusing it of adopting double standards to appease 'anti-nationals'.

Sharma told KNS over phone from Jammu that those being set free by the government are 'anti-nationals' and that the coalition partners are adopting double standards to take people of the state for



a ride. He stated that when the government has been beating the trumpet of freeing more than four thousand stone pelters in Kashmir, why is it

silent over withdrawing the cases of Jammu youth who protested during the Amarnath land row in the year 2008. "If the government has decided to give amnesty to the youth of Kashmir Valley, why is it turning blind eye over the cases of Jammu youth who protested during the Amarnath agitation in the year 2008. If youth in Valley are freed, why not those of Jammu," Sharma told KNS.

The former minister in

► See Congress...Pg 02

DGP visits Drug-de-addiction centre Jammu

Our neighbouring country involved in Narco-terrorism: Dr. Vaid

Jammu, Dec 09: Opening and running drug de-addiction centers in the state is an attempt by J&K Police to help the affected people to come out of tentacles of drug menace. This was stated by Director General of Police Dr. S.P. Vaid during an interaction at drug de-addiction centre Jammu.

He said, that police alone can't fight against the drug menace and added that police need help of all sections of society particularly judiciary,



lawyers in getting drug peddlers punished. The DGP said, civil society has to come for-

ward in eradicating the menace of drugs from the state.

► See Vaid...Pg 02

UN Security Council rejects recognition of Jerusalem as capital of Israel

SRINAGAR | DEC 09: The United Nations in its Security Council meet has rejected United States' recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, media reports said.

Pertinently, eight of the 15 members of the UN Security Council, had called for an urgent meeting on Friday to analyze the decision taken by Washington.

"The status of Jerusalem must be determined through negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians leading to a final status agreement," the five European nations said in a statement at the end of the meeting.

The European Union "has a clear and united position: we believe that the only realistic solution to the conflict between Israel



and Palestine is based on two States, and with Jerusalem as the capital of both the State of Israel and the State of Palestine," the statement said, indicating that until that occurs,

► See UN...Pg 02

JK PILGRIMS LIKELY TO TRAVEL VIA SEA TO PERFORM HAJJ NEXT YEAR

Hajj Minister says JK Govt holding talks with GOI to finalise option

Srinagar, Dec 09: The Jammu and Kashmir Government is holding hectic talks with the GOI to revive the option of sending pilgrims to Hajj via the sea route to Jeddah, after the gap of more than 23 years.

Minister for Hajj and Auqaf, Farooq Andrabi told KNS that the government is holding meetings with the central government as it is expected that the Hajj pilgrims will also be sent via the sea route to Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj. "We are holding talks with the central government

► See Pilgrims...Pg 02

Tarigami question New Delhi's stand on Trumps decision on Jerusalem

Srinagar, Dec 9: Senior legislator and Jammu Kashmir head for Communist Party of India Marxist, Muhammad Yousuf Tarigami Saturday asked the government to desist from using force against the people who are protesting against the decision of US President Donald Trump, to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and to shift the US Embassy there from Tel Aviv.

In a statement issued to press here he said the protests against Trump's decision are but natural as it has hurt the sentiments of people across the world. People across the world are protesting against this unjust decision. The J&K Government must not use force against the protesters as emotions are very



high here, and it doesn't take much to

► See Tarigami...Pg 02

Human Rights Violation: VICTIMS STAGE SILENT PROTEST IN SRINAGAR

Srinagar, Dec 9: Victims who have suffered worst form of rights violations and their relatives today staged a silent protest here in Kashmir capital Srinagar.

The protest was organized was International Forum for Justice, however, its chairman Muhammad Ahsan Untoo was detained by police before he could have reached the protest venue.

Those who were part of the silent protest included Human Shield Victim Farooq Ahmed Dar, Pellet victim from Safakadal Zahid Manzoor and others.

One of the victims Nasurullah Khan told CNS that he was ruthlessly beaten up by soldiers in Lolab Valley of Kupwara. "I suffered from kidney failure. I was with

► See Victims...Pg 02

Disallowing seminar exposes tall claims of democracy: JRL

Terms government action as 'state terrorism'

Srinagar, Dec 09: Police Saturday disallowed a seminar called by Joint Resistance Leadership (JRL) at Hyderpora Srinagar and arrested several leaders during their raids.

JRL comprising of Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Muhammad Yasin Malik in a statement issued to KNS termed the government action as "state terrorism", saying that at a time when the



world was observing Human Rights Day, however administration is reluctant to allow peaceful programme and forces in Kashmir are committing massive violations of

human rights.

The seminar titled "human rights violations and criminal silence maintained by international community" was supposed to be attended by resistance leadership including prominent speakers and scholars, who were invited by Joint leadership to share their views on the topic.

The statement said that since Saturday morning, all

► See JRL...Pg 02

TWO MONTHS ON, DODHI MOHALLA WITHOUT WATER SUPPLY

SRINAGAR | DEC 09: Residents of Dodhi Mohalla in Mendhar Sub division of Poonch district is without water supply from last two month, forcing locals to fetch water from wells.

The residents of Dodhi Mohalla in Salki Madain village, which comprises of 40 households, said that from last two month there is nowater-supply in the area.

"The water to our village was being supplied from Chote Shah area of Sakhi Madian but since then we are without drinking water facility. Our women have to walk in this harsh winter to fetch water from wells and streams," said a local elder.

► See Water...Pg 02

Chief Secretary reviews progress of land acquisition in PMDP Projects

JAMMU, DECEMBER 09: Chief Secretary, B B Vyas Saturday chaired a video conference with Deputy Commissioners across the state to review the progress of land acquisition proceedings and to expedite resolution of bottlenecks in major PMDP projects under implementation in the state in the road, power, health, education and tourism sectors.

Commissioner Secretary, PW(R&B) Department, Commissioner Secretary, Revenue, Secretary (Technical), Forest Department, Deputy Commissioner, Jammu, Deputy Commissioner, Ganderbal, Director, PD&MD, Regional Officer, NHAI, J&K, Project Director NHAI, Jammu and other senior officers attended the meeting.

Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir and DCs of Kashmir & Jammu divisions participated via video conferencing.

In the road sector, Chief Secretary reviewed the progress of land acquisition in respect of ring road projects around Srinagar and Jammu cities, Zojilla Tunnel, Kargil-Zanskar road, Nimu-Padam-Darch, Srinagar-Shopian-Qazigund, Jammu-Akhnour-Poonch, Chenani-Sudhahadev-Goha roads and the 4 Lanning of National Highway from Jammu to Srinagar.

The meeting was informed that the Srinagar city ring road project involves an area of 278 hectares spread over six districts viz Budgam, Baramulla, Bandipora, Ganderbal, Pulwama and Srinagar, while as Jammu city



ring road project involves an area of 342 hectares. Chief Secretary directed the concerned DCs to complete all the land acquisition proceedings in a mission mode, so that land free from all encumbrances is handed over to the executing agency for commencement of work on the prestigious projects.

As regards other projects under PMDP in the road sector, which are under implementation including the Zojilla Tunnel and National Highways, it was informed that barring some minor land issues, the projects are progressing smoothly. Chief Secretary asked the concerned DCs to resolve these issues expeditiously.

He further asked the NHAI to ensure that compensation amount on account of land acquisition across

all projects is released to the DCs immediately for timely disbursement to the land owners.

In the power sector, the progress of land acquisition in 220 KV Srinagar-Kargil-Leh Transmission Line was reviewed. While no land acquisition issues were reported to be pending in districts of Kargil and Leh, Deputy Commissioner, Ganderbal was asked to address the issues in nine critical locations in district Ganderbal.

Chief Secretary reviewed the progress of land acquisition in the Gulmarg-Baramulla-Kupwara-Leh and Mantalal-Sudhahadev-Patnitop Tourist circuits. The concerned DCs were asked to submit the list of bottlenecks in land acquisition, if any, to the respective Divisional Commissioners, so that these can be resolved in a time

bound manner.

Chief Secretary also reviewed the status of land acquisition in the prestigious AIIMS projects at Samba and Awantipora and other education sector projects including IIMs at Jammu and proposed campus at Budgam. Deputy Commissioner, Pulwama was asked to hand over the land to the executing agency for commencement of work on the AIIMS project at Awantipora besides completing disbursements to the land owners by 31st December, 2017.

Chief Secretary asked Divisional Commissioner Jammu and Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir to facilitate expeditious land acquisition in all PMDP projects by regularly reviewing the progress with the concerned DCs and executing agencies.

Div Com reviews winter preparedness

Chairs Divisional Disaster Management Authority meeting

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 09: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Basir Ahmad Khan today chaired the Divisional Disaster Management Authority meeting and reviewed the overall winter preparedness with heads of various departments.



The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Chief Engineer R&B, Commissioner SMC, Director Disaster Management and other officials representing various departments. The DDC's of other districts participated via video conferencing.

The Div Com directed the officials to keep ready all of their men and machinery to meet any kind of eventuality in the event of inclement weather. He called on the R&B, MED, SMC and Urban Local Bodies to ensure that the machines are deployed at the places of operation before the snowfall starts. He directed the officials to give preference hospitals and other places of emergency services for clearing of road blockades due to snow fall. He also directed the Directorate of Health Services to ensure availability of doctors, medicines and heating arrangements at all hospitals. Similar directions were passed on to PHE, PDD and other departments.

The Div Com was informed that two battalion of SDRF are on standby mode and it will be further augmented by personnel from

police, Fire and Emergency Services and volunteers. It was further informed that at various vulnerable locations police and army have trained volunteers so that they can help during the time of need. It was also revealed that for the first time every DDC have been given Rs 52 lakh each as mitigation fund to meet any eventuality and further money of Rs 58 lakh has been parked with Divisional Commissioner office beforehand.

The meeting was informed that essential commodities like LPG, petrol and diesel are stocked for almost 25 days and rice is sufficient for two months. The Div Com appreciated the work done by the officials during last winter's heavy snowfall. He called on them to follow the practice this year with same zeal. Various departments gave a detailed presentation on the winter preparedness. He said that every department should follow the Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) duly discussed already so that the before and after snowfall work goes on smoothly with little discomfort to public.

Dir YSS reviews arrangements for 63rd National School Games

Football tourney to take place from Dec 11 to 15, Wushu from Dec 19 to 23

JAMMU, DECEMBER 09: Director Youth Services and Sports, Sheikh Fayaz Ahmad today convened a meeting to review the arrangements for the upcoming 63rd National School Games here.

The Under-17 football tournament for Boys is being organized from December 11, 2017 to December 15, 2017 while as the national level event in Wushu for Boys in U-17 and U-19 categories shall take place from December 19, 2017 to December 23, 2017. The Meeting was attended by Joint Director YSS Jammu, Madan Lal, Joint Director YSS Kashmir, Basheer Ahmad, Deputy Director (C), Haji Mirza Hussain and other senior officers of the department.

It was informed in the meeting that the department is ready with all the arrangements for the formal inauguration of the tournament, in which all the teams have been framed out and commencement of tournaments will be made as per the scheduled



date and time. It was further informed that more than 30 teams hailing from different parts of the country are participating in the event and the arrangements for their accommodation, bus services and other related facilities has been done by the department. Also the department has setup a control room for better coordination and smooth progress of the tournament.

On the occasion, the Director directed the concerned officers to ensure that every facility reaches each player and exhorted upon them to ensure better accommodation, bus arrangement, availability of venues etcetera to make it hassle-free football experience. Moreover, the Director commended the work of the officials for showing the utmost dedication towards their assigned roles in organizing such events.

"In the recent, 'Let's Play' tournament, the department made a big breakthrough in which more than 55,000 applicants registered themselves online and hoped that in the next session of national sports games, the registration process will be done online," he added.

Mechanical Engineering Deptt prepared to respond to situation effectively: Chief Engineer

18 Control Rooms activated across Kashmir

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 09: In view of the forecast of heavy snowfall and rains in Kashmir from December 11, the Mechanical Engineering Department (MED), today said it has put all the arrangements in place to ensure speedy snow clearance and dewatering.

"Mechanical Engineering Department, Kashmir is fully prepared for timely clearance of snow and all the preparations have been done to keep men and machinery ready to respond to any situation in view of the weather advisory from December 11," said Vijay Kumar Raina, Chief Engineer Mechanical Engineering Department Kashmir.

Pertinently, the Met Department has issued weather advisory according to which a western disturbance is approaching J&K and adjoining areas due to which moderate to heavy snowfall is expected at most places in the State from December 11 to December 13, 2017. "This system is likely to affect J&K from 9th

December onwards and produce moderate to heavy snowfall on 11, 12 and 13 December," the advisory said.

Responding to the advisory, Raina said as directed by the Government, the Department has carried out the mock drills, other preparatory works and has directed the officials at the district and provincial level to keep the men and machinery ready. He said the Minister for Works, Mr Naeem Akhtar is personally monitoring the situation.

"We have activated our control rooms including 10 in South Kashmir, 5 in North Kashmir and 3 in Central Kashmir. We have also created one provincial level control room which will keep track of every development across the region as far as the weather changes are concerned," he said, adding "Our manpower and machinery are ready and are in a state of preparedness, so as to minimize disruption of essential services, road connectivity, restoring electric supply, water supply, healthcare ser-

vices etc," he said.

Raina informed that the Department has prepared the 'Snow Clearance Action Plan', under which the men and machinery is deputed on immediate basis. Elaborating, Raina said the "Mechanized Snow Clearance Action Plan", covers almost all the major routes across Kashmir region. Besides, some additional roads have been incorporated in the instant plan as per the demand received from the Public Works Department.

He said during Snow Clearance Operations, it may not be possible to clear mechanically such portions of roads whose condition is abnormal having rough surface and the same shall have to be taken up for manual Snow Clearance by R&B Wing of the Public Works Department.

"We have to work in synergy and public support is vital in these operations," he said. "We have adequate staff and machinery available. But need support from all departments and enhancing communication channels are very

important in this regard," he said.

"Snow Clearance Zones" Raina divulged that as per the past precedence, the "Mechanized Snow Clearance Operation" has been divided into three Operational Zones for smooth implementation of the Action Plan. Zone-I includes Central Kashmir districts of Srinagar, Budgam and Ganderbal, Zone-II includes Anantnag, Pulwama, Shopian & Kulgam and Zone-III includes Baramulla, Kupwara & Bandipora including Gurez area.

Regarding availability of machines in the department, Raina said department has various machines, including some high-end equipment, like Snow Ploughs, Snow Cutters, Motor Graders, Motor Loaders and Dozers and Unimog.

"We have 141 machines standby and these have been distributed to various districts according to the requirement," he said. "This distribution has been done in accordance with the quantum of work in the

respective zones, and also with the fair consideration to the importance of the respective roads," he said. He said the department also possesses big fleet of road rollers, soil compactors, Motor Graders, trucks, tippers, cranes, excavators, dozers etc.

"Three Leyland Stallion Recovery Cranes and one each in the respective Snow Clearance Zone shall be kept as stand-by for recovery, servicing of snow clearance machines," he said.

He informed that the standby machinery will be kept as reserve and shall be deputed to various sites to deal with any emergencies to arise anywhere in the Valley. This decision has been taken in view of the problems faced previously during heavy snowfall in different parts of the Kashmir region, especially in Gulmarg, Shopian, Yousmarg, Beerwa and Kupwara etc. "For effective implementation of the operations, Mechanical Engineering Department issues Snow Clearance Action Plan every year.

In a first, Kashmir gets Model Apple Village in Bijbehara

High-density apple plantation to transform state's economic profile of State: Veeri

ANANTNAG, DECEMBER 09: Minister for Revenue, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, Abdul Rehman Veeri today inaugurated the State's first Model Apple Village at Khiram Sirhama in Bijbehara.

The major components of the Model Apple Village include a shift from traditional to high-density apple plantation, digging of borewells, construction of sheds in orchards, rejuvenation of old and saline orchards with new varieties, providing farm machines like tractors weeders, sprayers, setting up of juice preservation plant, grading, packing training to farmers.

District Development Commissioner Anantnag, Muhammad Younis Malik, Director Horticulture Kashmir, Deputy Director Horticulture Muhammad Yousuf Dar and other senior officers were also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister urged the fruit growers to shift to high-density practices to en-



hance apple production for greater economic returns in the field.

Speaking further about the prospects of high-density apple orchards in the state, the Minister said that it will change the economic profile of Kashmir.

He also asked the officers to send some orchardists of the area to foreign tours where they can witness prospects of high-density apple orchards and

use those better prospects here in Kashmir.

Recalling the interest of late Chief Minister Mufti Muhammad Sayeed in the high-density plantation, the Minister said that he was very keen to introduce high-density apple plantation in the valley for better economic prospects for the orchardists of the Kashmir.

Veeri said that it is important to

adopt newer techniques and best practices to survive the onslaught of emerging markets in and outside the country.

He stressed on the farmers to adopt better grading, packing practices for selling the product at better rates in the competitive marketing world.

The horticulture department will set up this Model apple village on a pilot basis and will initially cover 80 kanals of land in the village at a cost of Rs 5 crore. Deputy Director Horticulture Kashmir, Muhammad Yousuf Dar said that they are hopeful of success of the project and will be replicated in all apple producing areas in future as well.

He said that demo plants would be set up in the village where orchardists and horticulture department would have regular interaction during the development of high-density apple.

On the occasion, Veeri also distributed subsidy cheques among orchardists for the purchase of various machines.

Abdul Haq lays foundation of various projects in Kupwara district

Inspects various under execution projects; calls for early completion of public interest projects

KUPWARA DECEMBER 09: Minister for Rural Development, Panchayat Raj, Law and Justice Abdul Haq Khan on Saturday toured Kupwara district and laid foundation stone of various projects and also inaugurated a school building.

At Gagal in Wavoora block, Abdul Haq laid the foundation stone of 3 Kms Rantsanard to Bata Gagal road to be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 4.68 Crore. The road will ease the travel of various adjoining villages providing relief to thousands of people of the area. Public Works Division Kupwara will execute the project.

On the occasion, people welcomed the minister by showering flower petals and almonds besides singing traditional folk songs. They thanked the minister and the government for fulfilling the long pending demand of the people.

At Gagal B, Minister inaugurated High School building. The two storied building was constructed by the PWD Kupwara at a cost of Rs 94.05 lakhs under RMSA funding.

Speaking on the occasion the Minister highlighted the progress achieved under the

leadership of Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti. He said that the present government is committed to provide road network, drinking water, electricity supply, ration, transport, connectivity, and health facilities to the people living in all regions of the state especially the inaccessible areas so that they could avail the facilities launched by the government under various developmental and welfare schemes. He said that the rural connectivity and developing school infrastructure in rural areas was his first priority which is being filled in phased manner.

During the tour it was given out that Rs 36 Crs are being spent on Khumriyal-Rungwar road project besides macadamization of other roads in the area. However, the minister promised for construction of water harvesting tank in Gagal village, protection bunds, newly constructed school building besides developing playgrounds. He sought cooperation, support from public to carry out the developmental activities in the district.

Earlier the public projected charter of demands, while the school administration also presented charter of demands.

DAILY Editorial
Time and Us
SRINAGAR J&K

CAPITAL CRISIS — ON U.S. RECOGNISING JERUSALEM AS ISRAEL'S CAPITAL

U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, despite warnings at home and abroad, will worsen the Israel-Palestine conflict. Jerusalem, which houses holy places of all three Abrahamic religions and is claimed by both Israelis and Palestinians, is at the very heart of the dispute. Israel built its seat of power in West Jerusalem decades ago and occupied the East during the 1967 war, and later annexed it. Palestinians insist that East Jerusalem should be the capital of their future state. Even though there is a Congressional resolution in the U.S. urging Washington to relocate its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, previous American Presidents avoided doing so given the legal, ethical and political implications of the issue, besides their commitment to a negotiated two-state settlement. By breaking with this consensus, Mr. Trump has in effect endorsed the Israeli claims to East Jerusalem. The decision will likely help him bolster his image among the Jewish lobby in Washington as well as American evangelical groups, his social base. Israel is obviously happy. Though Arab countries have voiced protest, they are unlikely to challenge an American decision. Mr. Trump's move raises vital questions about U.S. diplomacy in the region besides putting new roadblocks in the peace process. It could be viewed as illegal as the Israeli claim that Jerusalem "complete and united" is its capital has been declared "null and void" by UN Security Council Resolution 478, which also asks member-countries to "withdraw diplomatic missions from the Holy City". The U.S. is now acting against the spirit of this resolution.

The Jerusalem gambit risks triggering another cycle of protests and repression in the Occupied Territories. In 2000, Ariel Sharon's visit to the al-Aqsa compound in the Old City sparked the second intifada. Palestinians are expressing similar distress today. The peace process is not going anywhere, while Israel has gradually been tightening its occupation and building new settlements. Hamas has already called for a third intifada. In the longer term, Mr. Trump has just made the two-state solution more complicated. The Israeli-Palestine conflict can be settled only after an agreement is reached on the status of Jerusalem. The city was not part of Israel in the original 1947 UN plan to partition Palestine. Jerusalem, which was supposed to be ruled by an international trusteeship, was conquered by Israel. This is why the UN has not recognised it as Israel's capital. With his latest announcement, Mr. Trump has endorsed the occupation. And in doing so, he has undermined the U.S.'s position as a neutral broker in Israeli-Palestinian talks. In short, he has dealt a blow to the peace process.

GETTING BACK ON TRACK

► C. Rangarajan

The national income numbers for the second quarter of 2017-18 has come as a relief. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has grown at 6.3% year-on-year compared to 5.7% in the first quarter. The trend of declining growth rate quarter after quarter, which was seen in the last one year, has been reversed. This is a welcome sign. However, doubts and concerns persist for some.

SIGNS OF REVIVAL?

Is this a flash in the pan or is it a sign of a revival? Can we expect a further rise in the growth rate in the rest of the year? Some people are disturbed by the excessive focus on GDP and its growth rate. It is true that development has many dimensions and for a balanced view, one must look at all of them. Nevertheless, GDP is an important indicator of the performance of the economy, and a faster rate of growth is most often a prerequisite for rapid social development.

What are the encouraging signs flowing out of the data on GDP for the July-September quarter? For this, we need to look at sectoral growth rates. The most encouraging sign is the performance of the manufacturing sector which grew at 7% against 1.2% in the previous quarter. This is really a turnaround, if we don't dispute the number. In the corresponding quarter in the previous year, the growth rate was 7.7%. It appears that the manufacturing sector has come out of the disruptions caused by demonetisation and more particularly, the implementation of the goods and services tax (GST).

Three other sectors which have grown strongly are the two subsectors under services — trade, hotels, etc., and public administration — besides electricity and other utility services. The trade sector grew by 9.9% and there is some indication by the Chief Statistician, T.C.A. Anant, that there could be some underestimation here.

Public administration grew at 6%, much lower than the previous quarters but still reasonably high. In fact, it is a good sign that despite a lower growth of government expenditure, overall growth rate picked up. Some calculations show that excluding agriculture and public administration, the GDP growth rate in Q2 was 6.8% compared to 3.8% in Q1. The electricity sector has done well with a growth rate of 7.6% compared to 7.0% in Q1.

The growth rate in agriculture was low at 1.7%. This was to be expected because the growth rate in agriculture was very strong the previous year. Even though the monsoon has been good, one should not expect a much stronger growth over a good year. The construction sector grew at 2.6% only. It is yet to recover from the impact of demonetisation. But that should not come as a surprise as demonetisation was directly meant to hurt



the way business was being done in this sector.

DISCOURAGING SIGNALS

The most discouraging sign is the behaviour of the Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF). It is true that GFCF at current prices grew at 6.3% in Q2 against 2.9% in the corresponding period last fiscal. This shows an improvement in terms of sentiment. However, as the growth rate of GFCF fell below the growth rate of GDP, the ratio of GFCF to GDP has fallen from 27.1% to 26.4%. This is truly disturbing. The fall must be due to a decline in private investment, as public investment during this period has done reasonably well. Without a rise in the private investment rate, sustained high growth cannot be maintained.

There are some doubts about the high growth in manufacturing. In this context, analysts draw attention to the disparities between the rate of growth in the index of industrial production (IIP) and national income statistics. For example, in Q2 of 2017-18, manufacturing under IIP grew at 2.2%. There is, of course, a difference between the national income and IIP figures, the former dealing with value added and the latter with total production. Nevertheless, such sharp differences raise some concerns. In the new methodology in estimating value added in the manufacturing sector, corporate data play a major role. This approach is not incor-

rect. Though many committees, including the one headed by me, on savings have recommended the use of corporate sector data, some cross-checking is needed. The government has set up the National Statistical Commission to give credibility to the Indian Statistical System. It must make effective use of it. Perhaps a clear statement from the National Statistical Commission will help to put the doubts at rest.

THE ROAD AHEAD

What do the numbers say about the future? After staying at the same level for two quarters, gross value added (GVA) has moved up. This may be broadly taken to mean that the decline in growth rate has bottomed out. Perhaps the glitches caused by GST have been overcome. That only amounts to the removal of a negative factor. Therefore, the immediate prospect is some improvement in the growth rate in the next two quarters. In the next two quarters, there is not much space for public administration to push the economy. Last year, a reasonable rate of growth was achieved because of the strong growth of government expenditure in all quarters. This year, at the end of the third quarter, fiscal deficit has almost reached the budgeted level. Even after allowing for some slippage, it is unlikely that government expenditure can act as a driver of growth. Thus, while one can expect the growth rate to pick up in the second half, any

substantial increase depends on the behaviour of private investment which remains intractable.

Yet another factor influencing growth is exports. India's export performance has picked up in the current year. In terms of growth rate, it was doing reasonably well. During April-September, exports grew by 11.52%. But there was a setback in October with the export growth rate turning negative. However, the world economy is generally looking better this year. World trade in 2017 is expected to grow at 1.7% compared to 0.8% in 2016. Improvement in the external environment may help to raise our exports. This may be another positive factor influencing growth, even though it is difficult to say how strong it will be. All in all, it appears that the GDP growth for the year as a whole may be around 6.5%.

For growth to pick up in a strong way, policymakers need to address the issue of declining investment rate. As pointed out already, the GFCF ratio has fallen to 26.4%. As late as 2014-15, the GFCF rate was 30.8%. Only when the reversal of this trend happens can we be assured of a sustained high growth of 7% plus. The excess capacity built up during the boom period must have been used up by now. A complex set of factors is keeping down the private investment rate. These factors need to be addressed in order to push up private investment, even as the pace of public capital expenditures, which have shown a pick up recently, is maintained.

The fiction of nonfiction

► SASHI KUMAR

In his Charles Eliot Norton lectures delivered in the early 1990s at Harvard University, subsequently compiled as *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*, Umberto Eco grapples with the categories of fiction and nonfiction in his subversively exploratory style. It is as if when he contemplates fiction long enough, it turns into nonfiction and vice versa. The fictional, or artificial narrative as Eco calls it, is partly comprised of and complemented by the nonfictional or natural narrative, and the other way round. At one point, Eco seems to suggest that if fiction were entirely unrelated to what is recognisable in the real world, or what is nonfiction, it would not be humanly cognisable. That seems commonsensical enough. What is perhaps not so self-evident is that nonfiction, which is rather simplistically considered as a repository of fact or truth, is never really all that simple or unadorned. There are elements of spin, distortion of perspective, innate biases and cultural contexts which colour or compromise the so-called factuality of what is observed or recorded. One man's nonfiction may even be another man's fiction, much like one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter.

It seems that behind the jargon in vogue these days of "alternative facts" and "post-truth", almost as if like their *raison d'être*, there lurks the dissatisfac-

tion, the sense of inadequacy, with facts and truth as we have known and experienced and accepted at face value till now. What makes for this new urge to redefine these well-worn concepts is the widening, as against the deepening, of the public sphere and the surge of exchange and interaction, of opinions and facts, on digital, online platforms. If a glass being half-full is a statement of fact, the same glass being half-empty becomes the alternative fact. When express truth becomes platitudinous, and proves insufficient in illuminating our condition, we seek beyond it to find intuitive communion with a belief system that poses as a higher truth. Digital technology's multimedia aspiration seems to be to progress from text, visual, video and audio into the immersive state of knowledge experience. It is the idealisation of the virtual over the material.

Towards the very end of his last lecture, the last chapter of the book, Eco talks about how to "deal with intrusions of fiction into life..." and how "reflecting on these complex relationships between reader and story, fiction and life, can constitute a form of therapy against the sleep of reason, which generates monsters". He says we will continue reading fictional stories, suspending disbelief, to make meaning of our lives: "Throughout our lives, after all, we look for a story of our origins, to tell us why we were born and why we have lived. Some-

times we look for a cosmic story, the story of the universe, or for our own personal story (which we tell our confessor, or our analyst, or which we write in the pages of a diary). Sometimes our personal story coincides with the story of the universe."

An epiphanic experience while on a visit to the science and technology museum of La Coruna in Spain clinches this conflation of the personal and universal for him. The curator of the museum takes Eco to the planetarium where a surprise is in store for him. The lights dim and to the accompaniment of a lullaby by the Spanish composer Manuel de Falla on the soundtrack, the planetarium's ceiling slowly configures back into the same sky under which Eco was born on the night of January 5/6, 1932, in Alessandria, Italy.

"Almost hyperrealistically," Eco recalls, "I experienced the first night of my life.... The planetarium used a mechanical device that can be found in a great many places. Perhaps others have had a similar experience. But you will forgive me if during those fifteen minutes I had the impression that I was the only man, since the dawn of time, who had ever had the privilege of being reunited with his own beginning. I was so happy that I had the feeling—almost the desire—that I could, that I should die at that very moment, and that any other moment would have been untimely. I would cheerfully have died then because

I had lived through the most beautiful story I had ever read in my entire life. Perhaps I had found the story we all look for in the pages of books and on the screens of movie theatres: it was a story in which the stars and I were the protagonists. It was fiction because the story had been reinvented by the curator; it was history because it recounted what had happened in the cosmos at a moment in the past; it was real life because I was real, and not the character of a novel."

Even without that conclusive edifying personal anecdote, under Eco's critical gaze, the two, and too, neat categories of fiction and nonfiction are already unsettled and collapsing into one another. Fiction draws on nonfiction as freely as nonfiction takes recourse to fiction. The Film Southasia (FSA) 2017 festival held in Kathmandu from November 2 to 5, which was essentially a curation of 63 of the best documentaries made in the countries of South Asia over the last couple of years, tellingly demonstrated this conflation, this mutuality, of the two.

Voyage of personal catharsis

The entry that was the joint winner of the first prize at the festival, *Demons in Paradise*, is a voyage of personal catharsis of the director-protagonist Jude Ratnam, in which the fiery imaginary of Tamil liberation from Sinhala domination in Sri Lanka is pitted against the reality of internecine, mainly cruelly LTTE-led, attacks that decimate the

Tamil militant groups, and is tempered by the goodness and kindness of sundry Sinhalese individuals and families providing succour and support to their Tamil neighbours and friends in defiance of the majoritarian aggressive chauvinistic mood. There is more grey than black in the tragic retelling—and for the protagonist, reliving—of the cause that was as much defeated by the ruthless military might of the state as it was betrayed by the power-politics of the Tamil resistance fighters themselves. The victory of the Sri Lankan armed forces is pyrrhic. The military defeat of the Tamils is unsustainably demeaning. There is no closure, not yet.

Nepali immigrants working for a living in abysmal conditions in coal mines in the north-eastern parts of India is a calamitous enough theme. An eleven-year-old boy with a sunny disposition, Suraj, at the centre of it, who, with unwieldy pickaxe, ventures into the dark cramped bowels of this inhospitable terrain to cut out a future for himself, because he has lost his mother and his father is a chronic drunkard, makes it searingly engaging. In this memorable film, *Fireflies in the Abyss*, director Chandrasekhar Reddy and his crew stay with the group like dogged chroniclers who have won their confidence and who can, without artifice, record their lives, shunting between the pits and their hovels, fairly intimately, capturing their very private moments with a matter-of-fact simplicity that is devastating, and

yet retaining that light touch that gives us colourful characterisations from the deadening amorphousness of coal. The cruel paradox of the lure of their home in Nepal that keeps them away from it in order to save enough to go back to a decent life there seems, at the end of the film, their unending story.

Speaking about gaining someone's confidence, it is incredible how Hemal Trivedi and Mohammed Naqvi wormed their way into that of the fundamentalist cleric and Islamist cultist, Abdul Aziz Ghazi, who shook the Pakistani establishment from his Lal Masjid, or red mosque, in Islamabad from where he preached and taught his jihadist doctrine, through a twisted, mind-numbing religious indoctrination, to scores of impressionable young minds, and which had to be taken like a fortress in a war, in 2007, by the armed forces of the government. Abdul Aziz's mother, brother, son and 150 students died in that action. But the man remains as unrepentant and unrelenting after this as he was before it, asserting without any qualms, in fact with unabated rabid fervour, that if he had a hundred sons he would martyr them all to his desperate cause. The forcefulness of his personality, his poisonous spell over his believers and his devastating candour with his interlocutors (the filmmakers who follow him about), are pitted against the story of a sensitive girl who escapes from the red mosque and wants to learn.

Outgoing Congress chief Sonia Gandhi celebrates 71st birthday as son Rahul steps in

NEW DELHI: Congress president Sonia Gandhi, who turned 71 on Saturday, will hand over the reins of the grand old party to her son Rahul Gandhi next week. For the past two years now, Sonia, who held the post for a record 19 consecutive years, has taken a backseat and the party was virtually managed by the 47-year Rahul who cleared all appointments. She has also stayed away from the party's election campaign this year.

However, Congress sources said Sonia will continue to guide the party, albeit in a different role. Rahul took a break from his hectic campaigning in Gujarat to be with his mother on her birthday. Congress leaders took to Twitter to wish the outgoing party chief. "Compassionate, hardworking, selfless. Calm and composed, yet dignified and strong. A force for empowerment against all odds. A mother, a leader, a friend. Wishing Congress President Sonia Gandhi a very

happy birthday," the party wrote on its Twitter handle. A binding force for the Congress and known for her ability to build alliances, Sonia could take the role of its chief patron or head the Congress Parliamentary Party. CPM general secretary Sitaram Yechury recently called Sonia the "glue" that binds the Congress as well as the opposition. He also credited her with playing a critical role in the formation of the UPA in 2004. Sonia also played a key task



in bringing 18 opposition parties together for this year's presidential and vice-presidential elections. Her aggressive stand on the land acquisition bill in 2015 forced the government to withdraw the controversial ordinance and shelve the idea of bringing a new legislation. However, Rahul's elevation will put an end to criticism that the Congress was falling in confusion between the two power centres though party leaders had maintained that the combination

of mature and youthful leadership was an ideal solution that had put them in a comfortable position. Such an agreement existed in the Congress in the past as well, they said, and cited the example of Rajiv Gandhi who served as a general secretary for four years when Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister and Congress president from 1980-84. Congress leaders indicated that Sonia is unlikely to seek re-election from Rae Bareilly in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

Congress habitual of blaming EVMs: Jitendra Singh

NEW DELHI: Union Minister of State Dr. Jitendra Singh on Saturday said the Congress party is habitual of putting blame of defeat on the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader's comments came after the Congress blamed some EVMs in Porbandar, Surat, Jetpur and Navsari were linked to Blue-tooth. Singh said the Congress' allegations were on the very predictable pattern that is being followed by the Congress party from the last few elections.

"The only difference this time around is that whether it was Delhi Municipal Corporation or Uttar Pradesh elections they would start finding fault with the functioning of the EVMs only when the results would start coming out. And, every time they would face the accusation of finding the fault with the EVMs after the results were announced," Singh said. He further added that this time they (Congress) have grown wiser and smarter and started accusing the EVM machines even before the results are announced to face the imminent defeat that they are going to see on December 18. "So, they have now pre-emptively graduated from one level of accusing malfunctioning to higher level. But, that itself is a confession or admission of the fact that they are going to face defeat on December 18. They have now started preparing a ground much before the results are announced," said the MoS in the Prime Minister's Office. The first phase of polling is being held in 89 assembly constituencies of Saurashtra and South Gujarat. There are 977 candidates in the fray, 57 of them are women candidates. The polling began at 8 a.m. and will continue till 5 p.m. Security has been beefed up in the state to ward off any untoward incidents and to maintain law and order. CCTV cameras have also been installed for effective monitoring and surveillance. Prominent candidates in the fray include Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), who is contesting from Rajkot (West), along with Congress' Shaktisinh Gohil and Paresh Dhanani. The second phase will be held on December 14 for 93 assembly constituencies. Counting of votes and the results would be announced together on December 18.

DCW chairperson meets President Kovind on Narela incident

NEW DELHI: Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) Chief Swati Maliwal met President Ram Nath Kovind today at the Rashtrapati Bhawan. She informed the president that after a raid in Narela, around 350 bottles of illegal liquor were caught from a house. A local volunteer, who provided information to DCW in the matter, was brutally assaulted by the liquor mafia. He was paraded naked in broad daylight. She briefed him on the issues related to women safety and the growing menace of illegal drugs and liquor being sold openly in the capital. Recently, the DCW has conducted several raids in Delhi

and has caught various offenders selling illegal liquor from their houses in Jahangirpuri, Burari, Holambi Kalan and Narela localities. Through DCW efforts, hundreds of liquor bottles have been confiscated. Maliwal also requested the president to help DCW secure its demands from the Centre. Firstly, a high-level committee should be created in Delhi. It will comprise of the union home minister, chief minister of Delhi, lieutenant governor, police commissioner and DCW. The committee should meet twice every month and take decisive steps to improve women



safety and to crack on the illegal sale of liquor and drugs in Delhi. Further, DCW has also demanded that a strong law should be passed in the country to prevent sexual assaults on women and children. Recently, a law has been passed in Madhya Pradesh for offenders, who commit sexual assaults on women and children. The punishment also carries a death penalty within six months. A law should be passed by the Parliament for the country, which should ensure death penalty to the offenders. The same should be ensured by enacting a central law to create adequate deterrence.

Gujarat polls: EVM issues have been resolved, says Bhavnagar DC

BHAVNAGAR: Bhavnagar District Collector Harshad Patel on Saturday said the Electronic Voting Machines (EVM), which allegedly had issues related to tampering, have been looked into and replaced, adding the polling was going on peacefully. Patel's remark comes hours after EVM malfunctioning in several polling stations made headlines in the very first hour of voting for the Gujarat elections. Speaking to ANI, Patel said, "There is no issue. At few places where machines had problems - that has been resolved. Machines have been replaced wherever required." "Polling is currently going on peacefully," he said. Also speaking on the issue, Congress leader Ahmed Patel requested



quick action. Patel took to Twitter and said, "There are reports of EVM malfunctioning in several polling stations. Request the Election Commission (EC) to take necessary action immediately (sic)." Earlier in the day, the poll panel received several complaints about EVM malfunctioning in Kosamba region of Valsad district. According to media reports, an EVM was also

tampered with in Rajkot East constituency, a complaint to the EC said. Meanwhile, talking to the reporters here, Patel slammed the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). "People from all social groups have gathered to vote because in three years, the BJP government has not done anything at the Centre, nor have they done anything in Gujarat in the last 22 years," he said. "They did not fulfil any of the promises made in their manifestos of previous elections," Patel added. The first phase of voting in 89 assembly constituencies of Gujarat began this morning. The second phase will be held on December 14 for 93 assembly constituencies while counting of the votes will be done on December 18.

Congress condemns PM Modi's Gujarat rallies



NEW DELHI: Congress leader Anand Sharma on Saturday criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's campaign rallies in the wake of the Gujarat Assembly polls, adding he and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Chief Amit Shah had lowered the dignity of their respective positions and political debates. "Going by the prime minister's language and the allegations that he is hurling I can say that he is rattled. Defeat is scaring him and the BJP in the face. The prime minister himself has been responsible, so is his party president Amit Shah, for lowering the dignity of the debate," Sharma told ANI. He added, "He is not talking about employment, development and economy. He is desperately seeking sympathy of the people through these actions and theatrical statements." In the run-up to the Gujarat Assembly polls, the rebuttal between the two parties has been going back and forth, but became intense after Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar's 'neech' remark.

Plea for VVIP cars to display registration number

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court on Friday asked the Centre and the city government to place before it the rules on the use of the State Emblem of India on cars of constitutional authorities and dignitaries, such as the President, instead of registration numbers. A Bench of Acting Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice C. Hari Shan-

kar sought to know the exact position on the issue while posting the case for further hearing on December 20. NGO Nyayabhooni claimed that the practice of displaying the State Emblem, instead of the registration numbers, makes the cars conspicuous and the dignitaries become easy targets for terrorists and anyone with malicious intent.

"The practice of replacing the registration mark with the State Emblem of India, instead of displaying them both is arbitrary and symptomatic of the desire to rule rather than to serve," the petition alleged. It further sought directions to the Delhi government and the Delhi Police to seize the cars used by the Rashtrapati Bhavan, Vice-Pres-

ident, Raj Niwas and Protocol Division of the Ministry of External Affairs for not being registered under the Motor Vehicles Act. The NGO referred to an RTI response by the Ministry of External Affairs saying that none of the 14 cars maintained by its Protocol Division was registered. It also claimed that the Rashtrapati Bhavan refused to give

details of the registration numbers of its cars on the ground that disclosure of this information would endanger the security of the State and life and physical safety of the President. It said that a person meeting with an accident involving such a car cannot bring any claim against it due to the absence of any identification mark.

Panama Papers case: ED attaches 10.35 crore assets of Chirayu Amin's company

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate has seized assets worth 10.35 crore in the form of mutual funds of Whitefield Chemtech, controlled by businessman Chirayu Amin and his family, in connection with the Panama Papers case. The amount, equivalent to \$1.6 million, has been attached under Section 37A of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). "The name of Mr. Amin and his family members had figured in the Panama Papers case with respect to their stakes or interests in Whitefield Global Investments Limited, in the British Virgin Islands," said the agency. The overseas company had been incorporated allegedly in 2015. Accordingly, the ED initiated a probe under FEMA. The agency detected that Mr. Amin and his family members - through their Indian company Whitefield Chemtech - had invested \$1.6 million for purchase of a three-bedroom apartment at Campden Hill in the United Kingdom. "For purchase of this property in the U.K., Whitefield Chemtech Pvt. Ltd. transferred an amount of \$2.4 million to its



subsidiary in Singapore, in the form of Overseas Direct Investment. This amount was further transferred to its step-down subsidiaries in the United Arab Emirates and the British Virgin Islands, from where \$1.6 million were used for purchase of this property," the ED said. Section 37A of FEMA stipulates that if certain foreign exchange, foreign security or immovable property is held outside India in violation of the Act, then a value equivalent to the amount can be seized within India. "Accordingly, an equivalent asset amounting to 10.35 crore in the form of mutual funds was seized under the provision," said an official.

Ahead of termination day, nearly 10,000 Tripura teachers look for relief

AGARTALA: The looming termination of 10,323 Tripura government school teachers on December 31 due to irregularities in recruitment will leave 40,000 lives dependent on them in the lurch unless the Manik Sarkar administration brings new rules to save their jobs. About 15 teachers have died of depression-induced ailments since May 7, 2014, when the Tripura high court ordered the termination of the teachers' jobs due to discrepancies in the hiring process. The All Tripura 10,323 Teachers' Association, which gave an ultimatum to the government on Friday to ensure job security by year-end, fears more depression-driven suicides if they are not reinstated after the termination order takes effect from January 1 next year. Members of the association have also imposed a railway and national highway blockade, affecting movement of trains and goods-laden trucks. "We have organised a series of agitations, had meetings with chief minister Manik Sarkar and the education minister. We did not get anything beyond assurances. We want a permanent solution," Uttam Kumar Dey, an association leader, said on Saturday. "We lost 11 members after the 2014 high court order and a few more after the Supreme Court upheld the high court

order on March 29. The ball is now in the state government's court, and we are doomed if it does not act fast," Dey said. Around 700 teachers left the association after qualifying through the Teachers' Eligibility Test a few months ago. But more than 70% of the teachers facing termination are past the eligible age to apply for TET or other jobs, association leaders said. State education minister Tapan Chakraborty has urged the teachers to call off their blockade since the Supreme Court is scheduled to hear the state government's petition on Monday seeking extension of the appointments. "The government is sympathetic to their plight, and we do not intend to use force on them for lifting the blockade," he said. The association too is divided on the mode of agitation. A section does not favour railway and highway blockade that "affects normal life" and prefers to storm the secretariat instead. Alternative Jobs Officials said the government had created 13,000 non-teaching posts soon after the apex court's verdict to absorb the 10,323 teachers facing the axe. Of these new posts, 12,000 were created in education department and the rest in social welfare and social education departments.

The BJP has been attacking Congress on various premises but primarily on its constant jibes on his humble beginnings. Sharma further said that the BJP had dragged the political discourse to a new low. Speaking about the recent suspension of Mani Shankar Aiyar, he added, "The Congress Party has taken a very firm stand. Mani Shankar Aiyar was asked to apologise; he apologised and was suspended. The prime minister will do great good to the country if he follows the same path." Another Congress leader Randeep Surjewala said that while they threw a leader who insulted the prime minister, the BJP and its leaders are continuing insulting Rahul Gandhi. "The prime minister did not talk about Gujarat once in his speech. He just talked about China, Afghanistan, Babur and Aurangzeb, which is why his allies (referring to the Shiv Sena) are using such language. One of our leaders talked ill of the prime minister and we threw him out of the party (Mani Shankar Aiyar)," Surjewala told ANI. Surjewala also said that no matter how much the opposition threw "dirt" on them, they would raise questions about the development of Gujarat. "These elections are not based on throwing dirt on others. You throw dirt on us, we will ask you about the elections. You will scare us, but we will talk about moving Gujarat forward. This is the only difference between the BJP and Congress," he said. The first phase of voting in 89 assembly constituencies of Gujarat began this morning. A total of 977 candidates are in the fray, out of which 57 are women candidates. The second phase will be held on December 14 for 93 assembly constituencies while counting of the votes will be done on December 18. The crucial elections are being seen as prestige battle for BJP, which has been ruling the state for last 22 years, and litmus test for the Congress.

Five new categories of mental illness identified

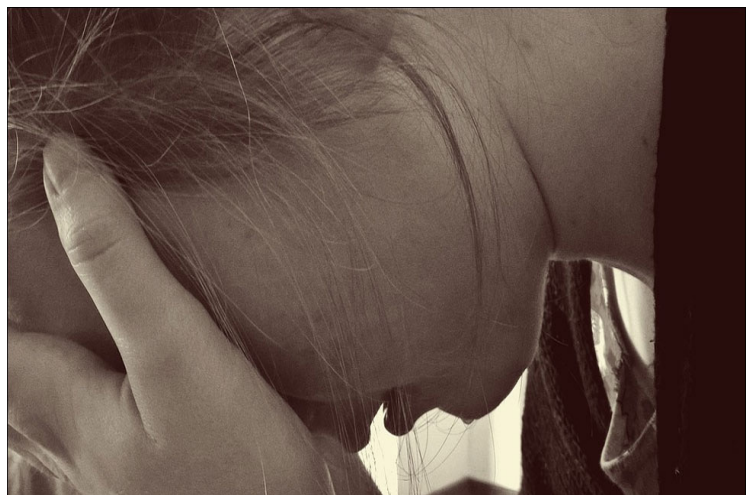
For many people, mental health issues are limited to depression, anxiety, schizophrenia and to an extent, bipolar disorder.

However, this layman knowledge is far too basic as mental health issues extend way beyond the commonly known problems.

In addition to that, scientists have identified five new categories of mental illness that cut across the current more broad diagnoses of anxiety and depression.

The five categories, defined by their specific symptoms and areas of brain activation, are tension, anxious arousal, general anxiety, anhedonia – the inability to feel pleasure – and melancholia. "We are trying to disentangle the symptom overlap in our current diagnoses which can ultimately guide tailored treatment choices," the researchers wrote in the study published in journal JAMA Psychiatry. The research helps better define mental illness in order to provide improved treatment plans for the millions of patients who suffer from these disorders. Currently, depression and anxiety are the leading cause of disability and lost productivity worldwide with only one-third of patients recovering from treatment, the study said.

The broad diagnostic categories as defined by the Diagnostic and



Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, such as anxiety and depression, have so many overlapping symptoms that it is difficult to identify biological markers for potential treatments or cures, researchers said.

"Currently, the treatments would be the same for anyone in these broad categories," said Lianne Williams from Stanford University in the US.

"By refining the diagnosis, better treatment options could be prescribed, specifically for that type of anxiety or depression," said Williams.

For their work, researchers collected and processed data from

420 participants both with healthy diagnoses and with multiple anxiety and depression diagnoses.

The participants underwent a series of tests involving brain mapping, self reporting of symptoms, and psychiatric diagnostic testing.

Researchers measured how well participants functioned in everyday life, their capacity for building social relationships and general outlook on life. The same tests were conducted with a second independent sample of 381 people. Using a data-driven approach that involved machine learning algorithms, researchers processed the data and were able to identify the same five new categories across both groups.

Results showed that 13 percent of participants were characterised by anxious arousal, nine per cent by general anxiety, seven per cent by anhedonia, 9 percent by melancholia and 19 percent by tension.

"Interestingly, we found that many people who did not meet diagnostic criteria, but were still experiencing some symptoms, fell into the tension type," said Katherine Grisanzio from Stanford. Tension was defined by irritability. People are overly sensitive, touchy, and overwhelmed. The anxiety makes the nervous system hypersensitive, researchers said.

Anxious arousal is when cognitive functioning, such as the ability to concentrate and control thoughts, is impaired. Physical symptoms include a racing heart, sweating, and feeling stressed. "People say things like 'I feel like I'm losing my mind. They can't remember from one moment to the next,'" said Williams.

Melancholia is when people experience problems with social functioning. Restricted social interactions further cause distress.

Anhedonia is described as an inability to feel pleasure. This type of depression often goes unrecognised. People are often able to function reasonably well while in a high state of distress.

Dear moms-to-be, avoid sugary drinks. They can increase risk of asthma in your baby



Sugary drinks are not just unhealthy for you but they can also harm your child. According to researchers, children between the ages of seven and nine may be at greater risk for developing asthma if they consumed high amounts of fructose in early childhood or their mothers drank a lot of sugar-sweetened beverages while pregnant.

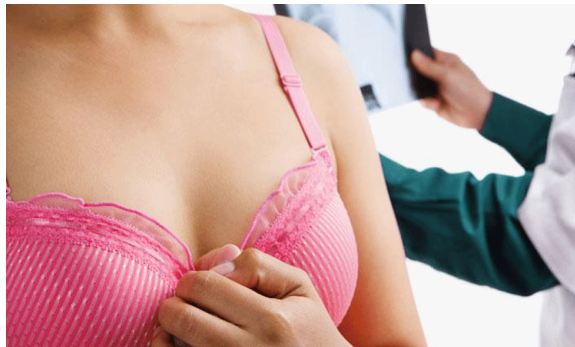
Lead study author Sheryl L Rifas-Shiman from Harvard Medical School and Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Institute said that avoiding high intake of sugary beverages during pregnancy and in early childhood could be one of several ways to reduce the risk of childhood asthma. The researchers analysed 1,068 mother-child pairs, designed to find ways to improve the health of mothers and their children. After their first and second trimesters, mothers who participated in the study completed questionnaires about their food and beverage consumption, including regular soda and fruit drinks. When their children reached early childhood (3.3 years), the moth-

ers completed another questionnaire to report their children's consumption of a variety of foods and beverages, including regular sodas and fruit drinks. Asthma in mid-childhood was determined by a mother reporting a doctor's diagnosis of asthma, plus wheezing or asthma medication use in the past year.

The results suggested that in mid-childhood, 19 percent of the children had asthma. Mothers in the highest quartile of sugar-sweetened beverage and fructose consumption during pregnancy were 63% and 61% more likely, respectively, than those in the lowest quartile to have mid-childhood-age kids with asthma.

Kids in the highest quartile of fructose consumption during their early childhoods were 64% more likely than those in the lowest quartile to have asthma in mid-childhood. The researchers explained that in addition to increasing asthma risk through obesity, fructose itself may cause inflammation in the lungs.

Bi-annual MRI effective in detecting breast cancer: Study



An MRI exam in every six months could be far more effective in detecting breast cancer in younger women with a high-risk genetic profile than an annual mammogram, according to a study.

The results suggest that for this population, intensive efforts to "downstage" aggressive breast cancer by finding small early lesions in women with high-risk mutations are crucial to improving outcomes.

"This study demonstrates, for the first time, that aggressive breast cancers can be caught early, without excessive recalls or biopsies," said Olufunmilayo Olopade, from the University of Chicago in the US.

Between 2004 and December 2016, the researchers recruited 305 women into a clinical trial.

Volunteers had to have a lifetime breast cancer risk greater than 20 per cent. More than half of the women enrolled (53 per cent) had mutations in breast cancer related genes, such as BRCA1, BRCA2 or CDH1.

After evaluation by a physician and a genetic counsellor, the participants were scheduled to undergo a clinical breast examination and a dynamic contrast-enhanced magnetic resonance imaging (DCE-MRI) scan every six months, and a digital mammogram every 12 months.

"Mammograms remain important for most women. But for women at high risk who are getting a DCE-MRI every six months, annual mammograms could probably be eliminated," Olopade said.

Brides-to-be, follow these tips to ensure flawless hair and skin on your wedding day

An exquisite wedding dress is not just enough to give you that jaw dropping look for your special day. Skin and hair needs special attention during this time too so make sure you are not ignoring these two aspects during your main day.

Chytra V Anand, a renowned Cosmetic Dermatologist and founder of Kosmoderma Skin and Hair Clinics lists down few tips to make sure you get flawless skin and shiny hair on your D day.

Start taking care of your skin at least 45 days before your wedding.



Get your basics right, analyse your skin type and understand if it's dry, oily, dehydrated or sensitive.

The biggest mistake some of the brides-to-be do is signing up for a lot of skin experiments just before the wedding. It's usually best to avoid doing anything new or drastic right before your event. The more time you have to prepare for the big event, the better your

skin will look. Try to follow a home regime for at least a month which involves a cleanser, toner and moisturiser depending on your skin type. Exfoliation with natural ingredients like walnut-orange peel scrub or raw milk and powdered almond scrub, is recommended as it will not make your skin too dry or too oily. It can be easily made at home and is suitable for all skin types. If you use any drying acne medications, back off for a day or two before the D-Day to avoid flaking. Have minimum of two skin re-

juvenating treatments three weeks apart before the big date.

This will increase the cell turnover and reduce pores' size and removes superficial tan.

For the body, get a body crystal abrasion done two weeks before the wedding, this will keep the skin smooth. Before you begin each of these treatments consult a professional and get your timeline for each of these procedures right. Some of them may have a downtime which you need to be aware of & plan accordingly.

Passing it on: Discrimination has 'spillover effect' on partner's health

Discrimination not only harms the health and well-being of the victim, but their romantic partner as well, a study has found. The research, which analysed a sample of nearly 2,000 couples, is the first study to consider how the discrimination experiences of both people in a relationship are associated with their health. "We found that when an individual experiences discrimination, they report worse health and depression. However, that's not the full story - this stress spills over and affects the health of their partner as well," said William Chopik, from the Michigan State University in the US.

The researchers studied the survey data of 1,949 couples ranging in age from



50 to 94. The participants reported on incidents of discrimination, as well as on their health, depression and relationship strain and closeness. The study, published in the journal Social Psychological and Personality Science, found that it did not matter where the dis-

crimination came from (eg, because of race, age, gender or other factors). What matters is that they felt that they were unfairly treated. That's what had the biggest impact on the person's health," Chopik said.

That discrimination had a spillover effect on the person's spouse or partner. Since people are embedded in relationships, what happens in those relationships affects our health and well-being, he said. "When one partner experiences discrimination, they bring that stress home with them and it strains the relationship. So this stress not only negatively affects their own health, but their partner's as well," Chopik added.

Take precaution: Bi-annual MRIs helps high risk breast cancer patients



An MRI every six months could be far more effective in detecting breast cancer in younger women with a high-risk genetic profile than an annual mammogram, according to researchers.

The findings showed that undergoing a dynamic contrast-enhanced magnetic resonance imaging (DCE-MRI) every six months helped "downstage" aggressive breast cancer by finding small early lesions in women with high-risk mutations -- that are crucial to improving outcomes.

The DCE-MRI scans detected node-negative, invasive tumours less than one centimetre and performed especially well in young women with BRCA1 mutation - which increases the risk for aggressive subtypes of breast cancer.

"Mammograms remain important for most women. But for women at high risk who are getting a DCE-MRI every six months, annual mammograms could probably be eliminated," said Olufunmilayo Olopade, Professor at the University of Chicago.

"For this group of younger women at significantly elevated risk, especially those with a BRCA1 mutation, we strongly support getting a DCE-MRI every six months," Olopade added, in the paper presented at the annual San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium. Between 2004 and December 2016, the researchers enrolled 305 women into a clinical trial with a lifetime breast cancer risk greater than 20%, who were scheduled to undergo a clinical breast examination and a DCE-MRI scan every six months, and a digital mammogram every 12 months. The DCE-MRI curtailed the spread of the cancers to the lymph nodes as well as detected tumours smaller than a centimetre. "This study demonstrates, for the first time, that aggressive breast cancers can be caught early, without excessive recalls or biopsies," Olopade said.

The researchers also suggested that all women should test for BRCA1 and BRCA2 at about age 30, regardless of personal or family history of cancer, that would detect mutations and help early action at preventing cancer.

Scientists develop fabric-based battery to power 'smart' clothes and wearable gadgets

The future of fashion is here. Researchers from Binghamton University in the US have created an entirely textile-based biobattery that can produce maximum power similar to that produced by their previous paper-based microbial fuel cells. The biobatteries exhibit stable electricity-generating capability when tested under repeated stretching and twisting cycles, researchers said. This stretchable, twistable power device could establish a standardised platform for textile-based biobatteries and will be potentially integrated into wearable electronics in the future, said Seokheun Choi, assistant professor at Binghamton University.

"There is a clear and pressing need for flexible and stretchable electronics that can be easily integrated with a wide range of surroundings to collect real-time information," said Choi, who led the study published in the journal Advanced Energy Materials.

"Those electronics must perform reliably even while intimately used on substrates with complex and curvilinear shapes, like moving body parts or organs," said Choi. "We considered a flexible, stretchable, miniaturised biobattery as a truly useful energy technology because of their sustainable, renewable and eco-friendly capabilities," he said. Compared to traditional batteries



and other enzymatic fuel cells, microbial fuel cells can be the most suitable power source for wearable electronics because the whole microbial cells as a biocatalyst provide stable enzymatic reactions and a long lifetime, said Choi. Sweat generated from the human body can be a potential fuel to support bacterial viability, providing the long-term operation of the microbial fuel cells.

"If we consider that humans possess more bacterial cells than human cells in their bodies, the direct use of bacterial cells as a power resource interdependently with the human body is conceivable for wearable electronics," said Choi.

Abbasi's autobiography talks of cricket glory, India's dubious role, tensions and ad hocism

KARACHI: 'Not a Gentleman's Game', the highly-anticipated autobiography of Arif Ali Khan Abbasi, the former head of the Pakistan Cricket Board and ex-chairman PIA, was finally launched in a graceful ceremony at the imposing Mohatta Palace Museum building here on Thursday.

An administrator par excellence — at cricket or otherwise — Abbasi enjoyed a long and distinguished association with the game in Pakistan that had more highlights than setbacks. It is not as if, though, that his tenure (s) at the PCB was entirely a bed of roses. He did have his share of controversies and upheavals. How well he tackled them is a credit to his good governance, an orderly mind and his inimitable ways of handling people and dealing with them which won him many friends across the globe, and a few detractors.

More importantly, Abbasi enjoyed the respect of the players since he always had their welfare close to his heart. And it clearly showed. Pakistan won many laurels in Abbasi's stints at the helm. Foreheads appeared less creased and shoulders hardly ever dropped as the national team conquered

several frontiers, both at home and abroad. It takes a bold, honest man to recognize another and Abbasi was fortunate that the legendary figure of Air Marshall Nur Khan took him under his wings early in his career to be his mentor, friend and guide. The long and cherished association of the two — in cricket, in PIA and many other vistas of life — brought the best out of Abbasi as they acknowledge each other's abilities and enjoyed great mutual respect.

In his book, Abbasi talks at length about the dubious role of the Indian cricket officials, with Jagmohan Dalmiya being an exception, and how they tried to create hurdles in all of the Pakistan's plans and suggestions at the ICC.

Not one to mince his words, Abbasi denounces the political interference in the game and the prevalent ad hocism which, in his opinion, has been detrimental to the game and is,

in fact, the mother of all evils afflicting the game in the country today. His education and early days in Pakistan, the influence of his coach Major Jacob Harris, his cricketing stint with the Pakistan Combined Universities comprise



a sizeable opening chapter of his book. So does his stint at the Oxford. Abbasi is frank and hard-hitting when he talks about the various tensions and pressures he was confronted with as the head of the cricket board. He also disapproves of match-fixers — if they are found guilty — and calls for life bans against them including Mohammad Amir and others who have been allowed to comeback

to the game despite their sins. On Thursday, Abbasi's tremendous services to the game, more remarkably his brilliance in pulling off a coup in 1983 when he snatched the Cricket World Cup from the clutches of the first world nations, his out of the box measures such as the introduction of neutral umpires and the match referees, his lead role in the formative years of the Asian Cricket Council, his

camaraderie with his colleagues as well as his juniors, the upliftment of infrastructure and the stadia and other aspects were eulogised by the prominent speakers on the dais.

They included former president and chairman ICC, Ehsan Mani, the chief guest of the evening, former captain Intikhab Alam, stylish ex-opening batsman Mohsin Khan besides the moderator,

ex-skipper Aamir Sohail. While both Mohsin and Intikhab recalled Abbasi's fine leadership skills and praised the spirit he inculcated in his colleagues at the workplace and among the players with his uncomplicated and ego-free style, Mani recollected his nearly three-decade old friendship with the author, calling him as the man of the hour who could give some direction to the radarless ship of Pakistan Cricket in these turbulent times. "Unlike the administrators of the game today,

who often show an increasing propensity to let matters drift, Arif Abbasi was a focused man in his job, taking quick and far reaching decisions that did Pakistan cricket a world of good," said Mani in his tribute to the author. Young Ali Junejo then read excerpts from the book which had captivating effect on the audience.

In his turn at the podium, though, Abbasi somewhat deprived the audience of the dramatic discourse that was, indeed, expected of him. Uttering a few words of thanks for the speakers and the tributes paid, Abbasi said he wouldn't add much to whatever has been said of him. But to what

many took as a gesture of modesty was in fact a bout of emotion that Abbasi was overcome with at the mention of his mentor Nur Khan. Earlier,

CEO Dawn Media Group Hameed Haroon opened the proceedings by attributing his 'sufficient' knowledge of the game to Abbasi and their long lasting friendship.

Few eyebrows, however, were raised at Salim Malik's conspicuous presence at the function. The former captain, who was banned for life by Justice Qayyum Commission in the year 2000 for bringing the game into disrepute,

had specially flown in from Lahore for the book launch. But Abbasi, who thwarted the Aussies' plan back in 1994-95 to embroil Malik into a nasty bribery scam during a series in Pakistan by conducting a court inquiry to unearth the truth,

have always believed that Malik was denied a fair trial by his successors. A bevy of ex-cricketers, officials, bureaucrats and friends graced the occasion as Abbasi signed away the copies of his book which indeed makes a compelling read for one and all.

Hafeez to leave for England next week for bowling action test



LAHORE: Seasoned Pakistan cricketer Mohammad Hafeez, currently facing suspension from the ICC for his illegal bowling action, is travelling to England next week to have his action assessed there. The action of 37-year-old Hafeez, an off-spinning all-rounder, will be assessed by biomechanics expert Dr Paul Hurrion and bowling coach Carl Crowe who has worked successfully with West Indies off-spinner Sunil Narine in rectifying his illegal action. "Pakistan team's bowling coach Azhar Mahmood, who is already in England, would be present during the assessment of Hafeez's action," said a PCB press release issued on Friday. "After the assessment both the experts would devise a remedial work action plan that would be handed over to Azhar Mahmood for [its] implementation in Pakistan," the release added.

"Azhar and IBARC comprising Ali Zia, Sajjad Akber, Saleem Jaffer and Aleem Dar would then work with Hafeez under the guidelines given by Dr Paul Hurrion and Carl Crowe for correctness of his bowling action. The committee would also perform periodical testing at PCB biomechanics lab at LUMS in Lahore to make sure Hafeez's action is well within the allowable benchmarks before recommending that he may be sent for re-testing at any ICC-accredited biomechanics lab," the press release further said. "The above-mentioned plan has been discussed with Hafeez, who has agreed to follow it up after having gone through his initial assessment on his bowling action in England," it concluded.

The ICC has suspended Hafeez from bowling on the basis of the biomechanics report of Loughborough's Town England which conducted his test on Nov 1 after the bowler was reported on Oct 18 in the One-day International against Sri Lanka in the UAE. It is the third time the bowling action of Hafeez, a veteran of 50 Tests, 195 ODIs and 81 T20 Internationals, has been declared illegal by the ICC.

Ashes: England coach Trevor Bayliss fumes over Ben Duckett bar incident

NEW DELHI: England coach Trevor Bayliss has described Ben Duckett's behaviour as "not acceptable" after the batsman was stood down from an Ashes tour game on Saturday and suspended by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) following an incident in a Perth bar. Bayliss confirmed that the 23-year-old Duckett, who is part of the England Lions training team in Australia, had poured a drink on a senior England player -- with reports suggesting it was paceman James Anderson -- after a heated argument late on Thursday. "I'm not sure exactly what more I can say. I'm sure there will be some stern words from above.

Mohammad Amir's choices should be worthy of his class

LAHORE: He has class adorned with panache. Lethality backed by passion is his forte. The youngster was widely designated as the successor to the great Wasim Akram. And the man has risen to the top when the occasion demanded.

Ask none other than iconic Virat Kohli who candidly regards the left-armer as the top gun in modern-day cricket. Mohammad Amir ever since his much-anticipated and controversy-laden return to international scene has been the thrust of Pakistan fast bowling.

The exceptional calibre of the pacer was never in doubt even before the 2010 spot-fixing scandal reared its ugly head. His reputation as an upright competitor was tainted but, unlike the other two culprits in the saga, Amir after admitting his guilt and showing remorse somehow received muted plaudits from across the cricketing world.

Rediscovering the form at the top after five long years was a colossal challenge. But he did it and the dark period of repentance and isolation is now behind him. Figures at times can be highly misleading. There has been no wickets galore for Amir after his return to international cricket early last year (44 wickets in 16 Tests at an average of 37.25; 30 wickets in 21 ODIs at 30.26; 15 wickets in 14 T20 Internationals at 24.33). But, then again, this astute pace merchant is a big-game player. Wasn't Kohli's scalp worth 10 million

dollars when Amir bamboozled him twice in two balls at the high-voltage Champions Trophy decider earlier this year? What about Tillakaratne Dilshan who was trapped by the same pacer on a short-pitched delivery in the opening over of the glitzy 2009 World T20 final at Lord's? Rohit Sharma is a run-machine against many bowlers yet the prolific Indian opener has time and again proved to be a bunny in front of Amir. English crowd saw a rejuvenated Amir in the 2016 Test series during which the bowler kept on bothering the opponent batsmen but was unfortunately short on wickets due to dropped chances. All this is top shelf stuff. Now this genuine pace bowler of the highest echelon is going to exhibit his skills at the much talked about T10 League starting in Sharjah later this month. Earning through profession is everybody's fundamental right. However, one strongly reckons horses-for-courses is an adage that every rational individual should always be aware of. Outstanding talent is precious and therefore should be employed for advanced tasks. Amir is a true high-flying fighter, an intelligent warrior.

Though the 25-year-old Amir has age on his side, yet there are a number of reasons for him to remain selective in picking the contests.

Firstly, he is the pace spearhead of Pakistan team, and there is nothing bigger than national duty. Pace bowling legends Fazal Mahmood,



Imran Khan, Wasim and Waqar Younis and many other cricketers produced by the country were lauded for their glorious services to Pakistan cricket. Furthermore, Amir represents the country in all three formats which makes it tough for him to go out there and perform on every occasion. Injury and burnout are two major perils that are always lurking around, particularly for fast bowlers. One must not ignore that Dale Steyn, South Africa's top speedster, had to remain out of action for over a year due to a shoulder injury late last year. Will an injury in the T10 League depriving Amir of top-

level international cricket for say three to four months (or even more) be not hugely damaging for the bowler and Pakistan cricket? Secondly, Tests and One-day Internationals (not even Twenty20 games, what to talk of T10 fixtures!) are termed as benchmarks by the game's expert and critics. Outdoing batsmen in T10 games will not earn a pacer like Amir the grand and pure applause that he would receive in cut-throat five-day and 50-over competitions.

Furthermore, from the team's point of view Amir, along with fast-rising Hasan Ali and Junaid Khan has formed quite a menacing pace

bowling trio that can unnerve the best in business; they proved it in the Champions Trophy. Mohammad Abbas, Rumman Raees and Fahim Ashraf have shown they can also create ripples when summoned for duty. Now is the time to firm up this blend of pacers for meeting challenges ahead.

Therefore, the focus of these talented pacemen should be on strengthening their combination in order to keep their best for national duty. Last but not the least, to add to Amir's national duty workload there are international T20 leagues — above all Pakistan Super League.

Ex-captains fear England whitewash in Ashes

SYDNEY: Former England captains Michael Vaughan and Bob Willis fear the tourists are heading towards a 5-0 whitewash against Australia after failing to win the Adelaide Test.

England slumped to a 120-run defeat in the second Ashes clash this week on a ground widely seen as their best chance of winning. It followed defeat in the first Test in Brisbane with Perth's WACA Ground next up, where they have not beaten Australia since 1978. Vaughan suggested England had neither the skill nor resilience to win a match. "This was the week we all fancied England to take something from," he said in comments in The Australian on Friday.

"In Perth, the ball won't swing like this [in Adelaide]. We are now looking like we did in 2013, like we did in 2006-07, you look at this England side, and realistically, can you see them winning a Test match?" "I think it's going to be very difficult to win a Test match on this tour." Willis was equally pessimistic, saying Australia was clearly the superior side. "England are fighting as hard as they can, but the fact

differences are that Australia have expressed pace in these department and a world-class spinner.

We have neither. "At this rate, you wouldn't be surprised if it was 5-0, as Adelaide probably represented England's best chance to chalking up a victory." Captain Joe Root has insisted England are "still massively" in the Ashes series, while coach Trevor Bayliss said on Thursday that his team had left "a few scars" on Australia in Adelaide.

Another former England captain, Mike Atherton, said the loss of the opening two Tests had eerie similarities to previous tours Down Under, including those spearheaded by Alastair Cook, Andrew Flintoff, and Nasser Hussain. "All put a brave face on events; all tried to find the right tone but all, ultimately,

were powerless to stop an Australian juggernaut that, once rolling, gathers momentum with frightening speed," Atherton wrote in The Times.



Jamshedpur FC face FC Pune City test in Indian Super League

JAMSHEDPUR: Jamshedpur FC are on a high after having secured their first victory in the Indian Super League (ISL) season four a few days ago. Steve Coppell's boys have kept four consecutive clean sheets in the ISL so far and have proved tough to conquer. But come Sunday they will face a different challenge when they face a free-scoring FC Pune City.

The Englishman is aware of the attacking threat that his opponents possess. "Pune are a top side. It is fair to say that. They arguably have the two best strikers in the league. Both Marcelinho and Emiliano Alfaro were great last year. They make a lethal combination.

It will be a tough game but I think it enjoyable for everyone to watch," Coppell said at the pre-match press conference on Saturday. Coppell also confirmed that defender Anas Edathodika will be out of action for some time. His injury,

which he sustained during Jamshedpur FC's game against Kerala Blasters. "Anas is injured. He is not with us. He is undergoing specialist physiotherapy. As I said, he didn't travel with the team last time because we don't want him to travel and aggravate his injury," he said.

