



THE TIMES OF INDIA

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**TODAY'S
EDITION**

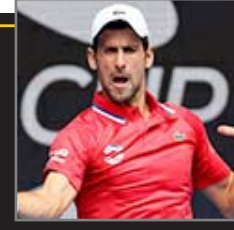
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STUDENT EDITION
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2021



**Puducherry
MAKES JAB
MANDATORY**

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IMF's Gopinath Warns Variants Could Derail Economic Recovery

The International Monetary Fund sees 'downside risks' to the global economic rebound it forecast for this year and next, and is concerned that the new coronavirus variants may hinder the recovery, its chief economist said.

"Most of the overall risks are to the downside," Gita Gopinath said, adding, "The omicron strain may increase risks to the outlook and the world could also see more aggressive variants that further damage the recovery."

Countries should tailor monetary and fiscal policies based on their own circumstances, as there are differences in underlying or core inflation from country to country," she said. **BLOOMBERG**



INDIA:

Fourth-most powerful NATION IN ASIA

India is the fourth-most powerful country in Asia, as per the Lowy Institute Asia Power Index 2021. The annual Asia Power Index, launched by the Lowy Institute in 2018, measures resources and influence to rank the relative power of states in Asia. The project maps out the existing distribution of power as it stands today, and tracks shifts in the balance of power over time.

Why is India middle power?

As the fourth-most powerful country in Asia, India again falls short of the major power threshold in 2021. Its overall score declined by two points compared to 2020. India is one of the 18 countries in the region to trend downward in its overall score in 2021, the report said.

The lost growth potential is due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic that has led to a diminished economic forecast for 2030, Lowy Institute said. India finishes in 4th place in four other measures: economic capability, military capability, resilience and cultural influence.

Indian economy hardest hit by Covid

As per the report, many developing economies, including India, have been hardest hit in comparison to their pre-Covid growth paths. This has the potential to reinforce bipolarity in the Indo-Pacific, driven by the growing power differential of the



India finishes in 4th place in four measures: economic capability, military capability, resilience and cultural influence

two superpowers, the US and China, in relation to nearly every other emerging power in the region.

The top 10 countries for overall power in the Asia-Pacific region are the US, China, Japan, India, Russia, Australia, South Korea, Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand, Lowy Institute said. **IANIS**



1 The Union Territory of Puducherry has made it mandatory for all people to get the Covid-19 vaccine amidst fears of the Omicron variant. The mandate was invoked under the provisions of the Puducherry Public Health Act 1973, and "those violating this will be liable for penal action," the order from the Director of Health stated.

2 The Union government has not made vaccination mandatory, but advises that all eligible take both doses of the vaccine.

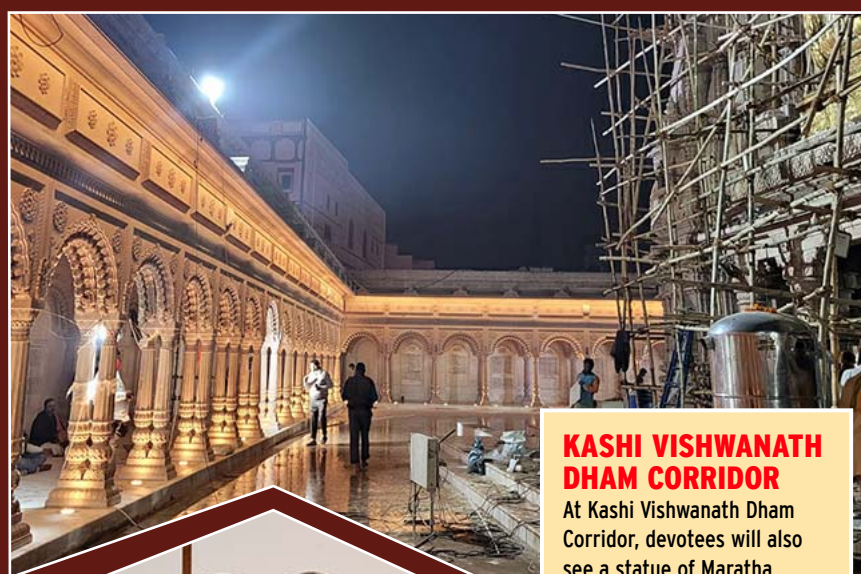
3 But states are imposing their own mandates. Karnataka, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have imposed certain curbs



on the movement of the unvaccinated people in public places. Delhi has made it mandatory for government servants to be vaccinated in order to work. Madhya Pradesh has said a vaccination certificate is mandatory to avail ration.

4 A petition has been moved in the Supreme Court challenging the validity of such mandates. The court, in a previous hearing, has said such mandates have to be proportionate to personal liberty. The next hearing is on December 13. **ANI**

Got an opinion? Write to toinie175@gmail.com



KASHI VISHWANATH DHAM CORRIDOR

At Kashi Vishwanath Dham Corridor, devotees will also see a statue of Maratha Queen Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar, who once reconstructed the temple.

■ The estimated cost of this entire project is close to ₹800 crore. It will connect Kashi Vishwanath Temple with the Ganga river.

■ Known to be Prime Minister's dream project this corridor will shorten the travel time between the temple and the Ganga river.

■ The corridor aims to give the temple area a decongested look that the historic city grapples for. Multiple constructions such as Temple Chowk, Varanasi city gallery, museum, multipurpose auditoriums, hall, devotee facilitation centre, public convenience among others have also been constructed. **ANI**



Varanasi Decks Up For KASHI VISHWANATH CORRIDOR LAUNCH

The city of Varanasi has been decked up before the inauguration of the Kashi Vishwanath corridor by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 13. The entire stretch of Godowlia to Maidagin has been painted in pink, to maintain a consistent look and bring out its rich heritage. "It is one of the biggest events for Varanasi. The city is gradually being decorated with lights for the inaugural day. Temples are also getting decked up with lights. A day before the inauguration 'shiv barat' will be held," said a state official to **ANI**.



Mobile Library Restarts In Kabul

A mobile library bus chugged to a Kabul orphanage last weekend and opened its doors for the first time since the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan, eliciting beaming smiles from children. "I'm really feeling happy. I'm studying the books I love again," said 11-year-old Arezo Azizi, whose favourite tome is a counting aid about a cat who gets more pieces of cheese the higher it can count.

The library "didn't come for three months, until now," she said, aboard a converted public bus and her voice rising above the excited chatter of her peers. The mobile library is one of five buses leased by a local organisation



called Charmaghz, established by Freshta Karim - an Afghan graduate from Oxford University. Hundreds of children have in recent years made use of the mobile libraries daily as they criss-crossed Kabul, as many schools lack their own library. **AFP**

India reclaims top spot in ICC Test rankings



After registering an emphatic 372-run victory against defending World Test champions New Zealand at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Monday, India reclaimed the top spot in the ICC Test rankings. The victory in Mumbai also meant that India registered their 14th consecutive series win at home and 11th straight under Virat Kohli's leadership.

Say Ameca! & her face comes alive

As robots evolve to do more work around us, the UK-based humanoid robot manufacturer Engineered Arts has infused more human-like facial expressions into one of its robots, which may leave you with an eerie feeling. In a video posted on YouTube, the robot called Ameca displays human expressions, like appearing to "wake up" from sleep, as its face shows confusion and frustration when it opens its eyes. Once awake, Ameca starts looking at its hands and arms, opens its mouth and raises its eyebrows, just like a human does. At the end of the video, Ameca smiles and holds a welcoming

hand out towards the viewer. According to the Engineered Arts, the humanoid bot is currently unable to walk and it is working towards giving it the ability in the near future. "Designed specifically as a platform for development into future robotics technologies, Ameca is the perfect humanoid robot platform for human-robot interaction," said the company. Ameca is scheduled to be on display at the CES 2022 meet in Las Vegas in January. **IANIS**

The World

this week

WILL

IN THE NEWS FOR

Expressing concern about the critical levels of air pollution in Delhi, a Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana and comprising Justices DY Chandrachud and Surya Kant, on Wednesday had emphasised that **the authorities should anticipate that the air quality will deteriorate in the future and then develop measures accordingly.** The judges suggested that the statistical models should be examined to identify the major factors for air pollution and then act on them.

Delhi air problem get solved?

WE SPEAK

1 There is a Decision Support System (DSS) offered by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) that zero in on exact sources contributing to Delhi's pollution and predict practical solutions.

2 The DSS, devised by the scientists at the IITM, exclusively for Delhi NCR has been regularly dishing out forecasts and possible scenarios that - if heeded to - can help curb pollution.



YOU SPEAK

We all know that Delhi has AQI levels that has reached unimaginable levels. People need to act. To begin with, we need to minimise use of cars and adopt car-pooling and Metro services. While the public do their bit, the Govt needs to stop stubble burning and trace statistical models and find solutions.

AADI VASUDEVAN, class IX, Sardar Patel Vidyalaya, Delhi

We students wrote a letter to the Prime Minister seeking urgent action against rising AQI levels in Delhi. The Govt needs to stop stubble burning and set up anti-pollution towers across the city.

INAYA GALA, class VIII, Springdales, Pusa Road, Delhi



TIMES NIE gives you this week's news capsule - a 360 degree perspective of major events that happened

around the world. But, this is not it. This is a platform to present your news, your way. **OWN YOUR NEWSROOM!**

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WHY

is it that India can't do away with coal?

IN THE NEWS FOR

International pressure is growing on India to further reduce its carbon footprint and commit to getting to a net-zero emissions goal. **Scientists have warned that global warming will worsen if we don't reach 'net zero' emissions - that is, the point at which we are no longer pumping any additional greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.** So, in recent years, a growing number of countries and businesses have been making their own pledges to 'go net zero' by various dates. Reducing coal dependence was the primary focus of the UN climate conference COP26 in Glasgow.



What is India trying to do in such circumstances: India is looking for more foreign investment to help meet its climate targets, not pressure from the West

WE SPEAK

1 India is the world's second-largest producer of coal, behind China. Critics worry that fossil fuel will be the centrepiece of the country's energy production for several decades yet, along with the environmental and health consequences that come with it.

2 The largest coal miner in the world, Coal India Ltd., is owned by the national government, and at least seven of India's states are heavily reliant on the revenues from extraction of the fossil fuel, including Maharashtra state, where Chandrapur is located.

3 The industry provides jobs for some four million Indians, as well as strong ripple effects in the economy.



YOU SPEAK



We all know that India is the world's second-largest producer of coal after China. We are dependent on it for energy needs. The industry employs over four million people. Also, if we were to abandon coal completely, then the country's economy will be hit drastically. With coal, we meet our energy requirements, without depending upon imports. In India, approximately 72% of electricity is generated using coal. This is the reason that coal is said to be the backbone of India's industry grid. So, for India, it is difficult to totally abandon coal.

RADHIKA CHOPRA, class X, Father Agnel Multipurpose School, Vashi

WHAT

can we do to contain Omicron?

IN THE NEWS FOR

The government on Wednesday decided not to resume scheduled international flights from December 15, less than a week after announcing the decision in the wake of rising concerns over the coronavirus variant Omicron. Aviation watchdog DGCA said the effective date for resumption of scheduled commercial international passenger services will be notified in due course. Scheduled international flights remain suspended since March 23, 2020, due to the coronavirus pandemic.



WE SPEAK



1 Even as the threat of the newest Covid variant - Omicron - looms large, on November 29, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said the situation was being closely monitored regarding 'any further decision' on resuming scheduled international passenger services.

2 However: The aviation ministry said 14 countries designated by the health ministry as 'at risk', and with whom there is an existing 'air bubble' agreement, would be allowed to resume 75% of pre-Covid operations (or a minimum of seven frequencies per week).

3 The 14 countries: The UK, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Finland, South Africa, Brazil, Bangladesh, Botswana, China, Mauritius, New Zealand, Zimbabwe and Singapore.

YOU SPEAK

A few measures concerning international flights must be taken. Firstly, allow passengers to enter the country only if it is very necessary. Secondly, rigorous screening and testing of passengers should be done. Also, the passengers entering the country should undergo the strict period of quarantine. This is the holiday season and a lot of expats travel to India. The government will have to tighten the checks.

SUDHIKSHA INNANJE, class XII, DPS South, Bengaluru



HOW

DO YOU THINK CRYPTOCURRENCY WILL CHANGE THE WORLD?

IN THE NEWS FOR



YOU SPEAK

Cryptocurrency is like Gold 2.0. The future of it depends on many factors - the biggest being changing our mindset about physical form of currency. Also, govt is yet to take a stance. Currently, it is neither banned nor regulated.

POORNA GHOSH, class XII, Anand Niketan School, Ahmedabad

I feel that crypto currencies, although a nascent concept, will usher in stability and slowly phase out the currency exchange system. It will revolutionise future payments.

NIMISHA SONI



WE SPEAK

WHAT IS BITCOIN?

Bitcoin is the original and most popular cryptocurrency, or digital coin, and started circulating in 2009. It was created by 'Satoshi Nakamoto,' designed to be free of central financial authorities like governments, banks and central banks. It is 'peer-to-peer,' meaning it can be transferred directly between online users without any intermediaries. Bitcoin is based on blockchain technology, which acts like a public ledger of transactions.

Do you think X'mas cheer will be hit this year?



IN THE NEWS FOR

Nations across Europe are taking new measures in an attempt to keep a Covid-19 spike from spiraling out of control, hoping that action now will safeguard the joys of Christmas this month.

WE SPEAK

Those who start the X'mas season while clearing Thanksgiving dishes might be right. "You're lucky you got your tree when you did," James Bianco, founder of a US research firm, said, adding, "It might actually be harder to get it in the coming weeks" as the new omicron variant further clogs supply lines, threatening to push US inflation even higher.

YOU SPEAK

Christmas time spreads cheer with its traditions - the crib, the tree, gifts, carol and togetherness. We set the crib and decorate the tree on Dec 1. Let's hope the Covid cloud won't dampen the X'mas spirit.

REYMA REJI, class IX, Gregorian Public School, Ernakulam



GLOBALISATION AFFECTS ECONOMY

Peter Madeston famously said, "Instead of saying that globalisation is a fact, that it's inevitable, we've also got to demonstrate that while the growing interdependence of the world economy is indeed a fact, it's not uncontrollable." The world is a tiny sphere. This saying has never been truer and if trends continue to develop the way they are doing currently, the world may continue to shrink and end up colliding to its brim. Globalisation is changing the world economy, opening up new opportunities for countries worldwide.

Proficient markets should be what every economy strives for. Fundamentally, the sign of an efficient market is where there is an equilibrium, between what buyers are willing to pay for a good or service and what sellers are willing to sell for a good or service. It



increases the competition. Anytime that you have multiple producers opposing the hold of an economy, that's a good sign for clients, as the quality of goods and services often goes up as a consequence. When your economy depends on

other country's economy, it is hard to envisage either one of the countries attacking the other. In a peculiar sort of way, globalisation helped amplify world security. As additional money flows into a country's economy, the government has

more assets to fund imperative initiatives such as educational encroachment. An additional gain to developing countries is the enhancement of health services and the extension of life anticipation in the general populace. Increases in profits and resources allow for greater access to food, medical services and health care. Our standard of living is so high compared too many nations that when we can no longer buy frivolous luxuries, we claim that we are poor. Globalisation may have stopped you from buying another flat TV screen, but it also helped countless people in developing countries put food on their table for their families. When we stand on a global stage.

We don't see our own shadow; we see the world's eclipse. Globalisation has truly had a gigantic effect on economy and it won't be wrong to say 'even the neighbourhoods seem like a whole another globe, because of globalisation of the world.'

By ANANYA ANEJA, class XII C
KIIT World School, Pitampura

ASN CELEBRATES WORLD TEACHERS' DAY



ASN Senior Secondary School, Mayur Vihar-1 in collaboration with United Nations Information Centre for India and Bhutan conducted an illuminating virtual conference on World Teachers' Day to recognise and honour teachers who contribute to make the community a better place for their students and furthermore teach their students to have a positive impact on the society as a whole.

The eminent speakers for the day were Manoj Ahuja, chairman CBSE; Andreas Schleicher, director of Education and Skills; Rajiv Chandran, officer-in-charge UNIC for India and Bhutan; Dr Joseph Emmanuel, director Academics CBSE; Dr Biswajit Saha, director Skill Education and Training CBSE; Dhuwarakha Sriram, chief generation Unlimited Youth Development and Partnerships UNICEF India; Abhishek Gupta and Abha Adams, governing Board Member, Learners International School.

Swarnima Luthra, principal ASN Schools gave a hearty welcome to the esteemed speakers. The floor was then open for them to share their expertise and take on the questions there after. It indeed was an enriching interactive session for all.

TRAIN THE TRAINER

With this maxim in mind, DPSG International organised a workshop 'Train the Trainer' on the topic 'Play based learning and jolly phonics' on November 20. It was conducted by the trained and IB-certified facilitators of the school, Himani Tyagi and Nisha Chaurasia. The workshop spelled out the importance of Jolly Phonics with IB based curriculum.

A brainchild of school principal, Meera Mathur, was conducted with the idea of sharing knowledge and best practices with teachers from the primary wing of other schools from different states of Uttar Pradesh, Orissa and Haryana. It was attended on online as well as



offline mode.

Resourceful handouts were provided to the participants. The facilitators provided insights that enabled the teachers to learn the technique of teaching children. Jolly

Phonics works by using a synthetic phonics approach as well as teaching children the five key skills for reading and writing. This programme imparts a play-based approach to teaching and learning.

WORLD COMPUTER LITERACY DAY

Ryan International School, sec 40, Gurugram has always been presenting informative and educative activities to ignite the young minds and give them the confidence to think beyond. Following this, Ryanites celebrated 'World Computer Literacy Day' with the aim to create awareness and drive digital literacy in underserved communities worldwide.

Young Ryanites of class V were very enthusiastic to make



the students aware about the development of technological skills. Students gave presentation on basic, nontechnical knowledge about computers and how to use them; familiarity and experience with computers, software, and computer systems.

School head Shivali Sharma appreciated the efforts of the students and encouraged them to possess computer knowledge to boost their self-confidence to be more innovative.

Winning Takes For The Common Man

ADWAIT S P

Father Agnel School, Vaishali, Ghaziabad

NISHTHA MAHESHWARI

Father Agnel School, Noida, Ghaziabad

YAKSH BHARDWAJ

Presidium Indirapuram, Ghaziabad

SHUBHANG GAUTAM

Vishwa Bharati Public School, Ghaziabad

DEVANSI GARG

KDB Public School, Ghaziabad

SYED SAMEEHA ALI

Uttam School for Girls, Ghaziabad

KARTIK SINGH

Cambridge School, Indirapuram, Ghaziabad

HANSIKA VERMA

Cambridge School, Indirapuram, Ghaziabad

VANSHIKHA NEGI

DLF Public School, Ghaziabad

TISTA HIJLI

Cambridge School Indirapuram, Ghaziabad

NAVYA HAKEEM

DLF Public school, Ghaziabad

YASHSHVI CHAUHAN

Adharsheela Global School, Ghaziabad

MEHUL AGARWAL

DPS, NOIDA

DISHA ADHIKARI

Vishwa Bharati Public School, NOIDA

OORVI GUPTA

Amity International School, Mayur Vihar, NOIDA

NIRVAAN DHAWAN

Somerville School, NOIDA

ADITI SHARMA

Cambridge School, NOIDA

TANISHKA GUPTA

Ryan International School, NOIDA

AARINI RAI BARANWAL

Amity International School, NOIDA



The regional winners for The Trust of India cartoon caption contest

THE TRUST OF INDIA

PARTH BHARDWAJ

DLF Public School, Ghaziabad

PRAPTI SHARMA

Dehradun Public School, Ghaziabad

KRITIKA JAISWAL

National Victor Public School, Ghaziabad

DAKSH

Vanasthali Public School, Ghaziabad

HARDIK KAUSHAL

Seth Anandram Jaipuria School, Ghaziabad

EKAGRA SUMAN

Presidium, Ghaziabad

CHANDAN GADNAYAK

St Teresa School, NOIDA

SHRIPOORNA PRADHAN

Bal Bharati Public School, NOIDA

GIRISHA SACHAN

Bal Bharati Public School, NOIDA

MANYA UPADHYAY

Delhi Public School, NOIDA

TANISHQ AMBIKA KAUL

Presidium Indirapuram School, NOIDA

SHUBHANKAR KUMAR RAI

Delhi Public School, NOIDA

NISHA KUMARI

Om Foundation, NOIDA

DEEPAK KUMAR

Nehru International Public School, NOIDA

SAKSHAM SHARMA

Somerville School, NOIDA

NAVYA SINGH

Somerville School, NOIDA

PALLAVI RAI

Jagran Public School, NOIDA

YATI SONI

Delhi Public School, NOIDA

Breathtaking landscape dotted with historical sites

I recently visited Sri Shankari Shaktipeethamin in Trincomalee, Sri Lanka, where one of the 18 (Ashta Dasha) Shakti Peethas is located. It was an exciting experience as I was there for my first solo dance performance at a venue and audience new to me. I truly believe that in the midst of the pandemic, when the world has paused, this was a god-sent opportunity to showcase my talent in another country.

I was delighted as I was travelling with my mother, my dance teacher (Guru) as well as a troupe of classical dancers from Bengaluru, Tirupati and Visakhapatnam.

We landed in Colombo, Sri Lanka and were told that our trip further would be by road. Sri Lanka's landscape is breathtaking and we saw many beautiful streams, waterfalls and Hindu and Buddhist temples enroute Trincomalee. Our local

guardian, Darshan, informed us that the country's population accounts for about 60% Buddhists, 20% Hindus and the remaining from other religions. My mother told me stories of the Ramayana which took place in Lanka. We went to a temple (which was Ashoka Vanam with hot springs which apparently was the place where Sita Devi came over to have a bath). There were many historical places and each had a story to tell.

Sri Lanka is also famous for gems, hence our visit to the Gem Museum was exploratory. The food was different as everything was cooked in coconut oil, an unknown taste for me.

My performance was highly appreciated by the audience and other performers. I saw a sparkle of pride in the eyes of my teacher and my mother. On the whole, it was an enriching experience. This visit to



Sri Lanka made me realise there are many must-see places around the world.

Samanvi, class V,
Gitanjali Devashray, Hyderabad

Children today have the liberty to follow their passion

As the pool of diversity in interests and hobbies increases, it is only natural that the people of today will extend their professional choices into formerly unconventional fields. With the internet being the brightest burning fuel of these new and innovative careers, there's no doubt that people have started to incline towards them. What may have seemed bizarre some time ago seems desirable now.

However, such transitions might be difficult for the middle-aged generations to accept. They may seem unconvinced about the safety and feasibility of building careers in new fields. But in recent times we have witnessed a multitude of cases where parents have encouraged their children to reach out and explore their passion and seek out different professions. They too see stories of success and achievement in atypical fields like social media, fine arts, video-making and such. The achievements of singers, sportspersons, models apart, RJs, VJs, chefs, have all opened up lot of avenues for youngsters today. It is evident from statistics and the growing freedom of the youth that following one's true, passionate interests is being normalised and appreciated.



Shreya Jorapur, class X,
class KLE Society's School,



Inika Jain, class VC,
Gitanjali Primary
School, Hyderabad

DEBATE

AGAINST

Children today are definitely encouraged to try various activities and have more exposure to opportunities in various fields. But the curriculum and facilities can be restrictive, and invariably deter youngsters from pursuing uncharted areas and new passions. Besides, non-academic activities are never mandatorily allocated time. So often even if one is passionate about a field, we do not get the time to pursue them. Study based evaluation is currently the only criteria for promotion to the next class or job. The lack of good facilities in many schools make pursuit of hobbies costlier. If more children get the liberty to follow their passion it would reflect in achievements in Olympics, Nobel and Booker prizes and many such accolades to oneself and our country. But we are still a long way away from having the liberty to follow our passion.

AUS TOUGH TO BEAT WARNS CUMMINS

Australian captain Pat Cummins, left, and England captain Joe Root walk across the field after posing with the Ashes trophy at the Gabba cricket ground

England begin first Ashes match without veteran Test bowling great Jimmy Anderson

Bowling great Jimmy Anderson was Tuesday left out of the England team for the first Ashes Test as Pat Cummins warned his Australian side, boasting some of "the all-time greats", would be tough to beat. The home team head into the Ashes opener in Brisbane on Wednesday defending the hallowed urn and with their arch-rivals having a dismal record in Australia, losing nine of their last 10 Tests.

ANDERSON LEFT OUT

The hurdles Joe Root's men must jump got even higher on the eve of the Ashes when veteran Anderson _ Test cricket's most prolific fast bowler _ was not named in England's 12-man match squad for the opening clash at the Gabba. Anderson was not risked after reportedly suffering a minor calf problem, although England did not give any reason for his omission.

England could simply be managing the 39-year-old's workload for what will be a gruelling five-match series, with the second Test starting in Adelaide in just nine days' time.

That will be a pink-ball, day-night match with conditions expected to be more helpful to Anderson's swing bowling. His absence leaves England to choose four bowlers from Chris Woakes, Mark Wood, Ollie Robinson, Stuart Broad and Jack Leach to form the attack alongside returning all-rounder Ben Stokes, who has barely played since July.

England were already without injured pacemen Jofra Archer, who is recovering from an elbow injury, and Olly Stone who has undergone back surgery. A decision on whether to include spin-

ner Leach or go for an all-seam attack will be made after a last look at the Gabba wicket before the toss on Wednesday morning.

THE ASHES

Higher up the batting order, Haseeb Hameed won the race to open the innings with Rory Burns ahead of Zak Crawley, while Ollie Pope was preferred to Jonny Bairstow at number six. "He's obviously a great player and it's a shame that he won't be out there tomorrow, but it doesn't change what we are going to do," said new Australian captain Cummins of Anderson.

CUMMINS SEES THREAT TO ENG

Cummins, who took the reins when Tim Paine quit over a text-messaging scandal, nominated Root, the world's number one Test batsman, as the key wicket for Australia. "He's going to be right up there as the biggest wicket, he's had a really good last 12 months or so, but I wouldn't necessarily say he's going to make it or break it for them," he said.

Cummins did suggest England could struggle against an Australia side that includes superstar batsmen Steve Smith and David Warner and bowling giants Josh Hazlewood and Nathan Lyon. "I look around our team and we've got a pretty special side," he said, although Australia haven't played a Test since January due to Covid.

"We've got some of the greats of all time of Australian cricket in our changing room and when you get most of them clicking we're going to be a pretty tough

team to beat. We get along really well and have a lot of fun, so hopefully a tight-knit group. We are enjoying our cricket and we're relentless when we have our chance to play," he added.

ENG HAVE POOR RECORD

England haven't won a Test in Brisbane since 1986 and have only done so four times, twice in the 1930s, once against the Kerry Packer-weakened 1978-79 Australians and 35 years ago during Ian Botham's heyday. But Root insisted the first Test, where showers are forecast, would "not define" their Ashes campaign.

CUMMINS vs ROOT

One particular contest between bat and ball could shape this Ashes series.

Pat Cummins is set to lead the home team, putting a fast bowler's perspective on Australia's test cricket captaincy for the first time since the 1950s. Joe Root is primed to lead England with the bat, again in a series he thinks may define his career.

"A bowling captain for Australia and a batting captain for England _ two captains going toe-to-toe will be great," England wicketkeeper Jos Buttler said on the eve of the first test. **AP**

"Avoiding defeat would be a brilliant start to the series, absolutely," he said before the Anderson news was confirmed. "In many respects we've got nothing to lose coming here for this series. **APF**



Photo: AFP

DJOKOVIC SET TO PLAY ATP CUP

Named in Serbian team for Sydney, weeks ahead of Aus Open

After months of speculation that Novak Djokovic may miss the Australian Open over tough Covid vaccination requirements, the world number one was on Tuesday named to play in a Sydney tournament weeks before.

The 20-time Grand Slam champion had cast doubt on whether he would defend his title at Melbourne Park next month, refusing to reveal whether he was inoculated against coronavirus.

However, he was listed as part of the five-man Serbia team when the draw was made for the ATP Cup in Sydney that will precede the opening major of the year.

Rafael Nadal was missing, with the Spanish fellow-20-time Grand Slam winner last month suggesting he would play an exhibition in Abu Dhabi this month, then another tournament before arriving in Melbourne for the Australian Open.

The only other absent top 20 player for the 16-team ATP Cup was injured Swiss great

Roger Federer. "The playing group enjoy representing their countries and to see 18 of the world's top 20 players commit to the event is testament to that," said tournament director Tom Lerner. "The event shows off the passion the group have for this format."

Russia are the defending ATP Cup champions after their team spearheaded by Daniil Medvedev and Andrey Rublev swept past a Matteo Berrettini-led Italy in the final. Djokovic's Serbia won the inaugural event in 2020, overpowering the Nadal-led Spain.

The teams in next year's US\$10 million event, from January 1-9, are divided into four groups of four, playing across two Sydney venues _ the Ken Rosewall Arena and Qudos Bank Arena _ with each tie comprising two singles matches and one doubles.

The ATP Cup kicks off a bumper series of ATP and WTA tennis tournaments in the lead-up to the Australian Open, beginning on January 17.

Events are set to be held across Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne. **APF**

NO EXEMPTION FOR AUS OPEN

- Djokovic, who has won a record nine titles at Melbourne Park including the last three, has repeatedly declined to reveal whether he has been vaccinated against COVID-19, with Australian Open organisers Tennis Australia confirming that all players would have to be vaccinated to compete in Melbourne.
- To play without being vaccinated in Sydney, the capital of New South Wales

state, the state government would have to apply for an exemption for Djokovic and the 34-year-old would have to undergo 14 days quarantine upon arrival.

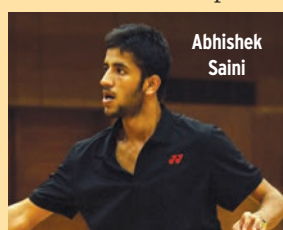
- That same option was also open to Australian Open organisers but the government in Victoria, of which Melbourne is the capital, has said it would not apply for exemptions.

INDIAN SHUTTLERS SHINE IN SA, BANGLADESH

Indian shuttler Aman Farogh Sanjay claimed a second successive men's singles title South Africa International Future Series in Johannesburg, while . Abhishek Saini defeated compatriot Rithvik Sanjeevi to clinch the men's singles title at the Bangladesh International Challenge badminton tournament at Dhaka.



Aman, ranked 300, showed tremendous grit as he recovered from the opening game loss to outwit South Africa's Robert Summers 15-21 21-16 21-12 in 44 minutes and emerge as champion. The 21-year-old, who is the reigning Khelo In-



dia Youth Games champion, had claimed the Botswana International Future Series title last week, after securing the Benin Open title in August this year. Aman had finished second best at the Kenya International Future Series in 2019. The South Africa international Future Series, organised by Badminton South Africa under the auspices of

the Badminton World Federation, is a four-day event. Abhishek Saini defeated compatriot Rithvik Sanjeevi in straight games in the summit clash played on Sunday. Saini beat Sanjeevi 21-15 21-18 in 34 minutes. **m**

QUIZ TIME!

Q1: In which year did Brett Lee make his Test debut?

- a) 1999 b) 1996 c) 2009 d) 1995

Q2: The Charminar Trophy is associated with _____

- a) Athletics
b) Cricket
c) Badminton
d) Pole Vault

Q3: Rafael Nadal won the 2019 US Open. Who was the runner-up?

- a) Novak Djokovic
b) Daniil Medvedev
c) Dominic Thiem
d) Alexander Zverev

Q4: How many Olympic medals did Romanian gymnast Nadia Comaneci win?

- a) Three b) Five c) Seven d) Nine

Q5: The national game of Indonesia is _____

- a) Badminton
b) Table Tennis
c) Archery
d) Pole Vault

Q6: England's Harry Kane scored 4 goals in a 10-0 rout of _____ to seal a World Cup spot for England



Photo: AP

- a) Albania
b) San Marino
c) Andorra
d) Poland

Q7: Sergey Bubka is associated with _____

- a) Baseball
b) Football
c) Cricket
d) Pole Vault

Q8: With which sport is the term "Birdie" associated?

- a) Chess
b) Volleyball
c) Table Tennis
d) Golf

Q9: Volleyball is the national sport of which country?

- a) England
b) Sri Lanka
c) Russia
d) Pakistan

Q10: Which country hosted the first ICC World Cup?

- a) India
b) Australia
c) England
d) Westindies

ANSWERS: 1) a). 2) a. 3) b. 4) d. 5) a. 6) b. 7) d. 8) d. 9) b. 10) c.