



THE TIMES OF INDIA

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**TODAY'S
EDITION**

➤ Know the story behind the usage of idiom 'Make bricks without straw', and much more in 'Wizard's Corner'

PAGE 2


➤ As we take a step towards healing the Earth, an NIE reporter highlights the importance of trees for the mankind

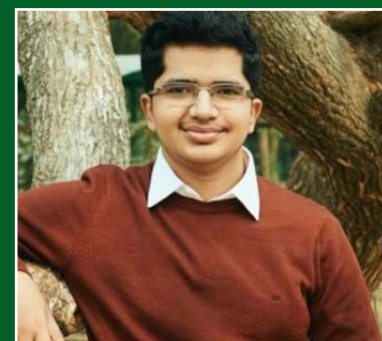
PAGE 3


➤ A look at top 5 bowlers who can make a difference in the India-SA series

PAGE 4

STUDENT EDITION

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2021


**Quote
unquote**


The climate movement in India is mostly restricted to the cities, that is why it is being led by the privileged section of the society. The lack of awareness is among the topmost reasons as to why it is not inclusive of all the classes and communities in India. In the developed countries, governments listen to the masses. Here, it is not the case. For example, crores of money are being spent on the installation of smog towers in Delhi, but they are not effective. I believe that if the problem of air pollution becomes a voting issue, only then something can be done about it

Aditya Dubey, 18-year-old climate activist and winner of Diana award, which honours young people who work to improve the lives of others

CLICK HERE: PAGE 1 AND 2
NASA gears up to launch a \$10 bn machine that allows humans to peer back in time

James Webb Telescope: The most-powerful space telescope ever built

On December 24, an Ariane 5 rocket will take to the skies from Arianespace's ELA-3 launch complex near Kourou French Guiana. Its payload will be one of the most-precious pieces of cargo humanity has ever sent to space – the \$10 billion James Webb Telescope (JWST) – a device with the potential to markedly transform our conception of the early universe. With the ability to peer deep into the endless abyss (and effectively billions of years into the past) and reveal some of the earliest stars and galaxies to have ever formed in the universe, the JWST will allow us to understand how cosmic phenomena in our own backyard came to exist.

Although often described as a replacement for the Hubble Space Telescope launched in 1990, the JWST has some important differences and will, at least for the time being, work alongside Hubble to help astronomers unravel the mysteries of the cosmos. When Hubble was launched, it expanded our view of the universe, providing us with dazzling images of galaxies that appeared too faint to see with the naked eye

FEATURES

1 The JWST will allow scientists to see much farther out into space than Hubble. It can, reportedly, see objects 10 billion times fainter than the faintest of stars visible without a telescope, and thousand times fainter than what Hubble picks up

2 Unlike Hubble, the telescope will not orbit the Earth. Instead it will orbit the sun, around 1.5 million kilometres away from the Earth, at what is called the second Lagrange point, also known as L2

3 Webb will not sit stationary at the L2 orbit point. Instead, it will also move in another smaller orbit, roughly similar in size to the Moon's orbit around the Earth, which takes about six months

HOW IT WILL WORK

■ The telescope will be tightly folded inside the payload bay of an Ariane 5 rocket ■ Once in space, it will separate from the launch vehicle and begin its journey towards the orbit point ■ After being released from the rocket, Webb will gradually unfurl as it travels to its destination beyond the Moon, executing

one of the most-complex deployment sequences ever attempted ■ One of the goals of the telescope is to look back through time to when galaxies were young. Webb will do this by observing distant galaxies that are over 13 billion light years away from the Earth



NEWS IN CLUES

Who's the first cricketer to become a concussion substitute in Test cricket?

CLUE 1: The 27-year-old was born in Klerksdorp, South Africa.

CLUE 2: He was named as the Emerging Cricketer of the Year by the International Cricket

Council last year.

CLUE 3: Count Glamorgan, Queensland, Brisbane Heat and the Australian national side are some of the major teams he has played for.

Answer: **MARNUS LABUSCHAGNE.** The Australian middle-order batsman has dethroned England captain Joe Root from the No. 1 spot in the ICC Test rankings for batsmen, following his good performances in the first two Ashes Tests. Indian Test skipper Virat Kohli slipped a notch to be placed seventh, while newly-appointed limited-overs captain Rohit Sharma, who will miss the South Africa Test series due to a hamstring injury, remained fifth.

World's first SMS, reading 'Merry Christmas', sells for over 100,000 euros as NFT in auction

The first text message ever sent, reading 'Merry Christmas', was sold on Tuesday for 107,000 euros (\$121,000) as a 'Non-Fungible Token' at a Paris auction house. The text, which was sent on December 3, 1992, was put up for auction by the British telecom company Vodafone. Vodafone engineer Neil Papworth sent the SMS from his computer to a manager in the United Kingdom, who received it on his 2-kg 'Orbiter' telephone, similar to a desk phone but cordless and with a handle.

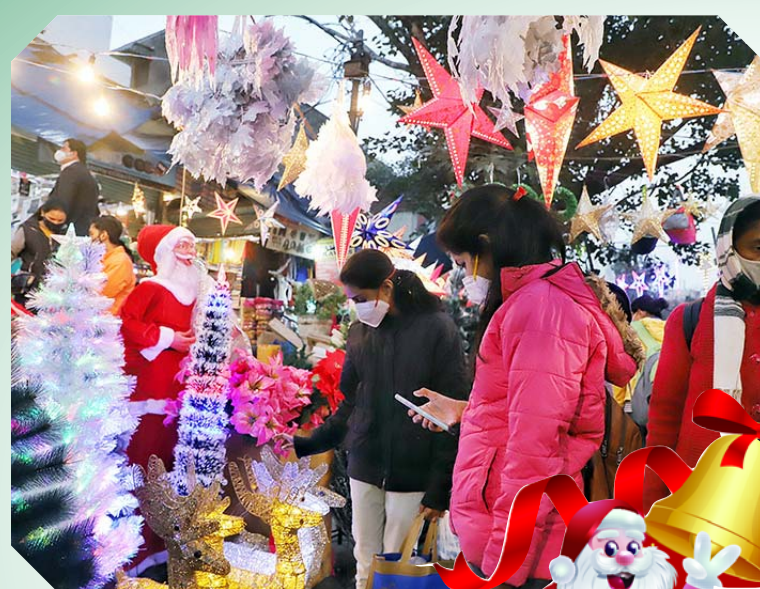


■ Non-Fungible Tokens, or NFTs, are a type of digital asset that has surged in popularity this year, with NFT artworks selling for millions of dollars ■ Traded since around 2017, these digital objects, which encompass images, video, music and text, exist on blockchain, a record of transactions kept on networked computers. Each NFT has a unique digital signature

World's first science-Sanskrit film to depict 'Mangalyaan' saga

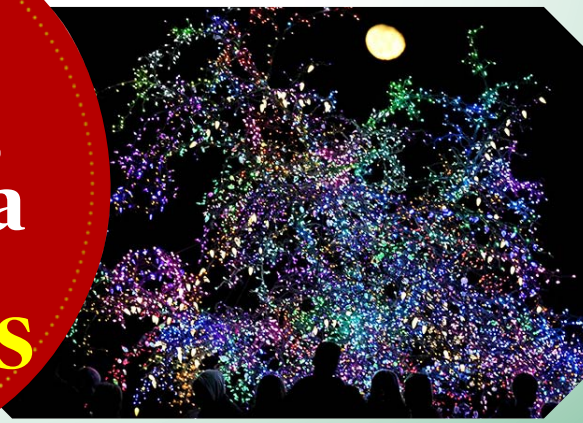


Don't be surprised if you find tough space exploration theories and technical jargons relating to rocket science being used in Sanskrit, the ancient language of Vedas and mantras, in a film. A science documentary in the classical language, considered to be the first such initiative in the world cinema, will soon enthral movie buffs with the success story of India's historic 'Mars Orbiter Mission' (MOM) alias 'Mangalyaan'. National award-winning filmmaker Vinod Mankara, known for his efforts to revive Sanskrit, which is generally considered a dead language, is coming out with the innovative docu film. Titled 'Yaanam', the proposed 45-minute movie is based on 'My Odyssey: Memoirs of the Man Behind the Mangalyaan Mission' penned by former ISRO chief K Radhakrishnan.



The month of December brings with it the perfect mix of chilly weather, good vibes, the promise of cheerful times, and an appreciation for the little things in life. This Christmas, be merry and usher in the celebrations with gratitude by taking a moment to thank your near and dear ones..

**Times
NIE
wishes
you all a
MERRY
CHRISTMAS**



THE TIMES OF INDIA

**ONLINE TOI
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**CELEBRATE THE
SEASON OF GIVING**

It's that time of the year again... and we are celebrating the real meaning of Christmas: the joy of giving

**WHAT TO
EXPECT**

- STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ON THEIR IDEA OF A PERFECT GIFT AND THE JOY OF GIVING
- CELEBRATE REAL-LIFE SANTAS
- CHRISTMAS MOVIES
- CHRISTMAS BOOKS
- HAPPY TUNES
- CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD
- CHRISTMAS FEASTS FROM INDIA
- TRIVIA
- AND MORE

MARK YOUR DATE | **DECEMBER 25, 2021**

COLLECTOR'S EDITION

Don't miss the 'Exciting Festive Edition' on this special occasion

LEVEL-1

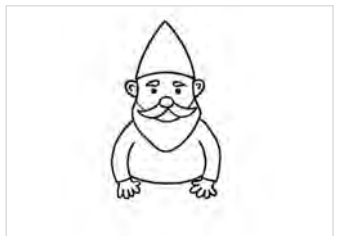


ANAGHA SASTIKAR
Art Educator
Bodakdev School For
Children, Ahmedabad

Draw the easy way



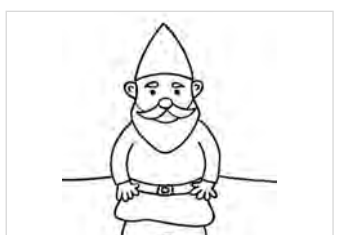
Step-1



Step-2



Step-3



Step-4



Step-5



Step-6



1) XEERUTT

- a. Exercise b. Texture
c. Village d. Superiors

2) TSEGAOH

- a. Discharge b. Hospital
c. Hierarchy d. Hostage

3) HACENIM

- a. Window b. Machine
c. Tubelight d. Teaser

4) EATMCJIS

- a. Mechanics b. Muscular
c. Majestic d. Mesmerising

Answers: 1) b, 2) d, 3) b, 4) c

Riding with the Riddle

SIDDHARTHA KOTHARI,
class X, St Joseph's Boys' High School,
Bengaluru

I am a soft, fluffy staple fiber. I am white in colour. I'm a very famous Cash Crop. Huge Industries turn me into attractive products. My fiber is most often spun into yarn or thread and used to make a soft, breathable, and durable textile.

Answer: Cotton

CHRISTMAS CLASSICS

SURYAKUMARI DENNISON, teacher, Aavishkar Academy, Bengaluru



3 In a story by Dr Seuss, the creature who tries to steal Christmas is the

- A) Grinch B) Gorgon
C) Ghost D) Griffin

4 Not in Clement Clarke Moore's 'The Night Before Christmas' is a reindeer called

- A) Dancer B) Dasher
C) Dollar D) Donner



5 The TV Special, 'A Charlie Brown Christmas', is based on the comic strip

- A) Walnuts
B) Groundnuts
C) Chestnuts
D) Peanuts

Quiz TIME



Complete these statements on Christmas poems and stories. Choose correctly!

1 'Hercule Poirot's Christmas' is by

- A) Arthur Conan Doyle
B) Agatha Christie C) Ruth Rendell
D) Raymond Chandler

2 The miser in Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' is

- A) Bob Cratchit
B) Nigel Fezziwig
C) Ebenezer Scrooge
D) Tiny Tim

Answers: 1) B, Agatha Christie 2) C, Ebenezer Scrooge
3) A, Grinch 4) C, Dollar 5) D, Peanuts

LEVEL-2

Idiom-etrics

SURYAKUMARI DENNISON, teacher, Aavishkar Academy, Bengaluru

(Choose the idiom that best suits the situation)

Everyone wondered why Meera was participating in the painting competition. They had never seen her draw anything, and felt she was wasting her time. When the entries were finally displayed, Meera's beautiful portrayal of a spectacular sunset left staff and students speechless. "This is amazing, Meera!" exclaimed a teacher. "None of us knew of your aptitude for art. Your secret skills have come as a big surprise."

- A. Hobby horse B. Stalking horse
C. Dark horse

Answer: C



Photo: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

Mohan was ill equipped to head the Drama Club because he had never read a play in his life.

- A. Make bricks without straw
B. Drop a brick
C. Hit one's head against a brick wall

Answer: A



TRIVIA

In the biblical account of the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt, Moses urges Pharaoh to set his slaves free. Instead, Pharaoh imposes a heavy burden on them. "You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks as before," he commands the taskmasters. "Let them go and gather straw for themselves." Therefore, the idiom 'make bricks without straw' means to attempt to do something without the required resources.

EDITOR IN THE MAKING

WEAVE A STORY WITH HEADLINES

Include some of these headlines to make a story and give it a title. Mail the story to us at toinie175@gmail.com. The interesting one will be published in the edition. Watch out for this space!!!

The headlines:

- 1) Biden welcomes a new puppy to the White House
- 2) Joumou pumpkin soup gets cultural heritage tag
- 3) Bajranghi Bhaijaan once again
- 4) Can Mamata do her magic in Goa?



And the winner is...

ANJALI DESAI
class IX, St Xavier's, Ahmedabad

HAPPY HAPPY WORLD!

Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder, but then, we do have beauty contests and I am happy that one I liked the most, is Miss Universe 2021. What a delightful start of the day as I rushed to catch the school bus. On the way, I saw huge piles of plastic waste. Despite aggressive campaign of "Say no to plastic", this waste piled up roadside bothered me.

On reaching school, I shared my concern with my friends and one of them shared that "Plastic waste sculpture museum to come up near Bengaluru". She added, "This can be replicated in every city." Soon, Chemistry teacher entered the class and seeing worried look on my face, she thought I have Chemistry fear. She said, "Be diligent to bond with Chemistry."

After a long but a fruitful day at school, I came back home to find more joy as my father and brother were delighted as they shared the news in the Times of India that "Going Dutch! F1 gets a new world champ!!!"



NUMBER SERIES

1 Who is the Father of Mathematics?

- A) Girolamo Cardano B) Archimedes
C) Georg Cantor D) John Horton

Answer: B

2 Who discovered Zero (0)?

- A) Paul Erdős
B) John Horton Conway
C) Aryabhata, AD 458
D) Terry Tao

Answer: C

3 The average of first 50 natural numbers?

- A) 66 B) 29.7 C) 2.5 D) 25.5

Answer: D

4 When is Pi Day celebrated around the world?

- A) January 14 B) February 14
C) March 14 D) April 14

Answer: C

5 The value of Pi?

- A) 5.78278 B) 3.14159
C) 7.09072 D) 1.65488

Answer: B

6 Value of cos 360°?

- A) 1 B) 2
C) 3 D) 4

Answer: A



Learn a NEW LANGUAGE

GERMAN

1) Ich heiße ...

Meaning: My name is ...

2) Sprechen Sie Englisch?

Meaning: Do you speak English?

3) Wie heißt du?

Meaning: What's your name?

4) Wie geht es dir?

Meaning: How are you?

5) Gut, danke

Meaning: Fine, thank you

Work sheet

Q:1 How will you tell your name?

Q:2 How will you ask someone his name?

Q:3 How will you ask, "How are you?"

Q:4 How will you express your gratitude and inform that you are fine?

Answers: 1) Ich heiße Andreas 2) Wie heißt du? 3) Wie geht es dir? 4) Gut, danke

Be someone's Santa this CHRISTMAS

TEACHERS' QUOTE



Christmas rings in the atmosphere of peace and festivity in the air. The whole season has its own special feel to it and everyone seems to be happier and kinder. Over the years, Christmas has been commercialized with mere focus on Santa Claus, Christmas tree, Party and celebrations. God loved the world so much that He gave His only son Jesus that whoever believes in Him shall have eternal life. Jesus came to take away the Sin of the humanity and make us children of God.

DR. A. F. PINTO, Chairman, Ryan International Group of Institutions



- Let hope rule this Christmas.
- Let there be time, to redeem relations.
- Let there be hearts, to foster compassion.
- Let there be hands



If I am Santa for a day, I will try to bring as much joy, happiness, and peace to as many people as I can. I will send all

children to schools so that they can study well and live happily rather than earning in their childhood.

SADHNA TANEJA, JKPS, Shalimar Bagh



The spirit of Christmas is everywhere! Love, Peace, and Joy are strong words in the Christmas message, and the universal acceptance of the same has become much stronger, much more meaningful.

Christmas a time of wonder and of generosity and peace that brings family and friends together in celebration.

DR. POOJA TRILOK SHARMA, Principal, RPS International School Sec.50



If I were Santa, learning from the experiences of life, I would gift my students the understanding of practices of Social, Emotional and Ethical (SEE) learning so that I can ensure their empowerment for preparedness for the unprecedented social, mental, emotional, physical challenges the life poses. I would gift them resilience, kindness and compassion to make them better fit for the world.

DEEPA SHUKLA, Delhi Public School Ghaziabad Vasundhara

to heal humanity.
■ Let there be tokens of gratitude

and benevolence.
■ Let peace prevail, to rekindle

prosperity.
RITU SAXENA (TGT ENGLISH), DAV

Public School, Sector - 14, Faridabad

STUDENTS' QUOTE

If I were a Santa, I would gift all the happiness of this universe to all my near and dear ones. I would gift humanity to all the unprivileged humans. Lastly, I would like to freeze the moments that no one wants to lose it forever.

ISHITA CHAUHAN, class VI-A, Ravindra Memorial Public School, Shakti Nagar

Christmas is the spirit of giving without a thought of getting. Chocolates, hugs, love and peace all around the world.

TANISHA ARYA, XI-F, BBPS GRH Marg

If I were Santa, I would bring real and everlasting joy in the lives of my dear and near ones. I would give the gift of love and happiness that would make their faces shine forever and ever.

SHUBH MITTAL, IX A, DPSG International Ghaziabad

Christmas is indeed a special festival for everyone but Christmas is not a season or a time but a state of mind. To cherish peace and good will, to shower mercy, to offer to others without expecting anything in return, to have the real spirit of Christmas always. But why to wait for Christmas to be a good

human, you can always do good deeds and be kind to everyone always.

SATYENDRA SAINI, class IV-A, Ryan International School, Sec 40, Gurugram

For me Christmas is not just about Santa, decorations and presents, it is all about being kind and spreading cheer, peace and love.

NISHITA GUPTA, XI, St Mark's Sr Sec Public School, Meera Bagh

I dedicate this Christmas to the 73-year old librarian who has been donating every rupee he earned to the poor for 30 Years. He is the legend Mr P Kalyanasundaram. After being chosen as the 'Man of the Millennium' by an American organisation, he donated the entire amount of ₹30 crores he received, as a part of recognition, towards charity.

AARON SINGH, class VIII-A, Presidium School, Indrapuram

On the Christmas eve, I waited for my turn. Alas, I was the chosen one for a Christmas train from nowhere travelling to wishes galore. As the Santa sleigh rode past the moon, ferrying the Christmas star atop a tree. Lit-up, it unveiled hanging gifts to me, which the elf hauled to my bedroom.

RADHE DHOUNDIYAL, class VII-A, GD Goenka Public School, Paschim Vihar

If I were Santa, the most precious gift I would give to my near and dear ones is the gift of quality time spent with each other, in order to create treasured memories.

ANISHA SHARMA, class VII-C, Tagore International School, Vasant Vihar.

It's time for Christmas carols, cakes and gifts, bells and stockings, it's time for Christmas...the season of happiness!

REBECA DHARA, class XI A, Delhi Public School Ghaziabad Vasundhara

POEM

Oh my cosmos!

Oh! My friends,
Inhuman detachment
Now is in trends.
Cold blooded people
Ignore shivering hands.
They are busy,
In earning lands.
Innumerable painful eye
saying to world good-bye.
Hatred give no chance,
Corona goes on dance.
I want demolish evil
I want to kill covid devil.
Vaccine to kids I will gift!
They can study and
play and lift.
As a Santa I'll gift
happiness in each hand.

LAVANY SHARMA, class IV, RPS International school Sec.50

Let's celebrate a green Christmas

It's snow all around,
Christmas is on the ground.
Santa will come,
with loads of fun.
There will be a decorated
Christmas tree, and
everybody will be in glee.
But what if there would
be no snow,
Christmas tree without a glow.
Santa with a sleigh,
but no reindeer to play.
All this will become a reality,
if no action is taken honestly.
These are the effects of
climate change.

global warming is spreading
its range.
Wait! There is a solution,
in eco-friendly decorations.
Regift, Rethink and Repair:
And turn this Christmas from red to
green, for everybody's welfare.

AYESHA KHAN, class V-A, Seth Anandram Jaipuria School, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad

The real Christmas spirit

Glaring lights, twinkling stars,
dazzling eyes and snow-clad grass.
Christmas spirit in the air,
Its Christmas season everywhere.
The grinch's heart would
again grow,
Love and cheer, what a sight
to bestow.

It's the season when a saviour
was born,
To find and strike sorrow and scorn.
Christmas celebration is not
merely material,
It has a divine essence ever
so ethereal.

Gifts and presents under the tree,
Are a part of Christmas glee.
But what Christmas is really about
Is spreading joy and ecstasy
throughout.
Fill the town with smiles
so benign,
That it is the happiness that makes
the Christmas tree shine.
Spread affection and warmth all
around you,
Be someone's Santa be
someone's elf and be the
light for a few.

ADITRI NARULA, class XI-H, DPSG International, Ghaziabad

Student Corner



VANSHIKA UPRETI, class V-D, Rukmini Devi Public School, Pitampura



HRISHIKA BISTA, class V-B, GD Goenka Paschim Vihar



ATHARVA KESWANI, class VII B, BBPS GRH Marg

ANANYA GARG, class VI-E, Rukmini Devi Public School Pitampura



YASHIKA, class VIII C, K V Sector 8 Rohini

SPECIAL ARTICLE

Like every year, Santa will visit us again. And with no break to the yearly ritual, I know you all have got your wish list ready. But this year it is a bit different and sceptical. I was wondering if I was Santa, and wanted to gift you all lovely gifts, what would be the gifts? Well, as I

said before, this time I'm a little sceptical about my giving list and my ability to fulfill it. I have thought of something, we have never ever asked Santa before. Here is what I have thought of: **GREENERY:** Dear I, wherever I see barren dusty land and massive cutting of the mountains with haphazard constructions, kindly restore its greenery. When I fly, I must see vast blue oceans surrounded by lush greenery all around.



If I were to be Santa

FRESH AIR: Dear grandparents this is for you, I can't bear to see the old people like you wearing masks when you step out early morning. I want to see that joy and smile on your face while you breathe fresh air and chatter all along your way to temple.

CLEANLINESS: Dear Mumma this is for you! You want to see cleanliness wherever you go. You say cleanliness is next to godliness and you want to feel the presence of the Almighty everywhere. I will try to make our surroundings so beautiful that a person will think several times before littering.

LOVE AND CONCERN: Dear father this is for you, you feel pained when you see people fighting over petty issues

and families over property. I will let there be universal peace, love and concern for each other. No manmade boundaries and patches as nations. One world, one universe.

Lastly, I want to gift everyone hope, love, equality, inclusion and kindness, so that we can make this world a better place to live.

SHIVAM GODARA, class IV-C, Ryan International School, Sector-40, Gurugram

5 INDIAN WICKET TAKERS TO LOOK OUT FOR

Pace or spin, India boast a deadly bowling unit that has had a good run of success both at home and away, with some great performances against SA



Photo: ANI

Team India has been a force to reckon with in the longest format of the game. In the last 3-4 years, the team has dominated Test cricket, winning both at home and away, with some exceptional performances on foreign soil. One of the main reasons for India's recent run of success has been the bowling performances. The ability of bowlers to take all 20 opposition wickets anywhere in the world makes the pack a deadly unit. Be it the pacers or the spinners, the bowlers have had extraordinary performances, giving the team a chance to bounce back from any situation and finish on top. As Team India begins Mission South Africa, the bowlers will play a major role in deciding the series on Protea soil. A look at the top wicket takers...

Ravichandran Ashwin has had a dream run in 2021 in Test cricket, with 52 wickets in just 8 matches. Ashwin crossed many milestones this year, including becoming India's third highest wicket taker of all time, surpassing Harbhajan Singh's tally of 417 wickets. This was even after he did not feature in even a single Test in England. As Team India gets set for the Protea challenge, Ashwin will be one of Virat Kohli's go-to men in the spin department. With the likes of Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel missing out due to injuries, Ashwin will have more responsibility. The offie loves playing against the Proteas. He is the leading wicket-taker against South Africa in the current India squad. In the 10 Tests that he has featured in against them so far, the 35-year-old has 53 scalps at a terrific average of 19.75. With 5 fifters and one 10-wicket haul already, he will be a tough nut to crack.

R ASHWIN VS SA IN TESTS:
M - 10 | Wkts - 53 | BBI - 7/66 |
BBM - 12/98 | Avg - 19.75 | 5W - 5

Pacer Mohammed Shami has been a serious weapon in India's pace armory in the past few years. Be it home or away, Shami's resilience combined with his ability to bowl precise lines and lengths makes him a very dangerous bowler. Against South Africa, he has some fantastic figures to his name. In the 8 Tests he has played against the Proteas so far, Shami has got a total of 34 wickets and is the leading pacer with most number of wickets against South Africa in the current Indian set up. Along with a couple of fifters, Shami has a brilliant average of just under 21 against the Proteas. And on South African soil as well, the 31-year-old has impressed quite a bit, grabbing 21 wickets in 5 matches during the 2013 and 2018 tours. His performance of 5 for 28 in the second innings of the Johannesburg Test on the last tour helped India script a rare win. Shami's performance in the upcoming tour will play a key role if India are to create history this time around in South Africa.

MOHAMMED SHAMI VS SA IN TESTS:
M - 8 | Wkts - 34 | BBI - 5/28 | BBM - 6/74 | Avg - 20.91 | 5W - 2



Photo: AP

Veteran pacer Ishant Sharma will be India's most experienced bowler in the upcoming tour of South Africa with this being his fourth tour of the Rainbow Nation. In the past, he has done relatively well against the Proteas. In the 15 matches that Ishant has played against South Africa, the lanky pacer has managed 31 wickets with a slightly higher average of 43.51. In South Africa, the 33-year-old has got 20 wickets with his best figures of 4 for 79 being registered on the 2013 tour. With the experience that Ishant brings in, he could be a strong contender for the third seamer slot for skipper Virat Kohli.

ISHANT SHARMA VS SA IN TESTS:
M - 15 | Wkts - 31 | BBI - 4/79 |
BBM - 5/73 | Avg - 43.51 | 5W - 0

Umesh Yadav might not be a regular feature in the Indian team due to stiff competition in the pace department, but the 34-year-old has proved to be very useful from time to time with both the new and the old ball. A skillful

bowler, who is well known for using the old ball to good effect, he can be an interesting choice for skipper Virat Kohli in the South Africa series. Umesh has got the numbers against South Africa that might just force Kohli to go in with him. He is currently the fourth highest wicket taker against South Africa in the current Indian squad. In the 4 Test matches that he has played against the Proteas so far, he has got 16 wickets at a highly impressive average of 12.12. Although all his wickets vs SA were taken on Indian soil, Umesh has the proven art of reversing the ball and that might come in handy for Virat on this tour.

UMESH YADAV VS SA IN TESTS:
M - 4 | Wkts - 16 | BBI - 3/9 | BBM - 6/59 |
Avg - 12.12 | 5W - 0



Photo: GETTY IMAGES

Photo: ANI

REAL ROUND OFF YEAR ON A HIGH

Atletico Madrid suffering continues with fourth straight defeat, putting them in fifth place

Karim Benzema scored two goals in Real Madrid's 2-1 win at Athletic Bilbao on Wednesday to send Carlo Ancelotti's side into the winter break eight points clear atop La Liga. As Real ended the year with a bang, city rivals and defending champions Atletico Madrid suffered their fourth straight defeat, a 2-1 reverse at Granada, to leave them fifth, but a yawning 17 points adrift.

Benzema ultimately put the fixture out of reach of Real's Basque hosts in a matter of minutes, Oihan Sancet pulling one back with his speedy 10th minute reply which hit the woodwork before evading Thibaut Courtois. Benzema's 14th and 15th goals of the season consolidated his position at the top of the league's goalscoring chart.

Benzema dazzled with his opening goal from the side of the area. The France striker stunned Bilbao when he used one touch to send a pass from Toni Kroos curling into the far corner of the net. "What a striker, what a captain, what a player," Ancelotti said.

Benzema's second came after a poor touch by Bilbao defender Unai Nuñez gifted him the ball with only Simón's replacement, Julien Agirrezabala, to beat. "I like

this type of soccer in a great stadium like this, it makes me happy, but it makes me even happier to beat this good team," said Benzema, who was applauded by the Bilbao crowd when substituted late.

COVID HIT

A total of 12 players between Madrid and Bilbao missed the game after testing positive for COVID-19. That included Madrid midfielder Luka Modric and Bilbao's Unai Simón, the goalkeeper for Spain's national side. The outbreak on Madrid's squad gave Eden Hazard, Eduardo Camavinga, and Nacho Fernández the opportunity to earn rare starts.

"I want to highlight the players who hadn't played much were ready to go, that is the strength of a team that wants to compete," said coach Carlo Ancelotti. "Now to rest and get back those players who weren't with us today... I think that we can have them all back after the holidays."

bao crowd when substituted late.

Sancet struck from the edge of the area to send the ball in off the post. "We had our chance to tie the match," Bilbao coach Marcelino García said. "I am proud of how we played against a great league leader."

Atletico hit

Earlier Atlético's shaky defence of their La Liga crown took another big hit with injured duo Antoine Griezmann and Stefan Savic absent. Atletico would be more than happy to swap trajectories with Granada, for whom this was a third consecutive win in front of their home fans and their fifth game without loss.

This was certainly not how Diego Simeone envisaged the night before his 10th year anniversary in charge at Atletico. What's more, his Portuguese striker Joao Felix had Granada on the backfoot in the second minute when his low angled shot got the better of his fellow countryman Luis Maximiano. Venezuelan forward Darwin Machis levelled in the 17th minute. Felix had a header arguably harshly disallowed as the first half drew to a close with Jorge Molina grabbing the winner after the hour mark for Granada. AGENCIES



Karim Benzema

Photo: AP

WANT TO GAIN EXPERIENCE BEFORE PARIS OLY: SEN

Lakshya Sen, who scripted history by becoming the youngest Indian shuttler to win a men's singles medal at the 2021 World badminton championships, is focusing on playing more matches against different opponents in order to gain much-needed experience before competing at the all-important Paris 2024 Olympics.

Sen said he wants to learn from his mistakes and gain more experience with each tournament. "I have time before the Paris Olympics and I want to play more matches and big tournaments against different kinds of opponents in order to gain some much-needed experience and improve my game to compete at that level," Lakshya Sen said in an interview.

"Not just playing, I want to win big tournaments and improve my rankings, so that I can qualify for the Olympics and fulfil my biggest dream to



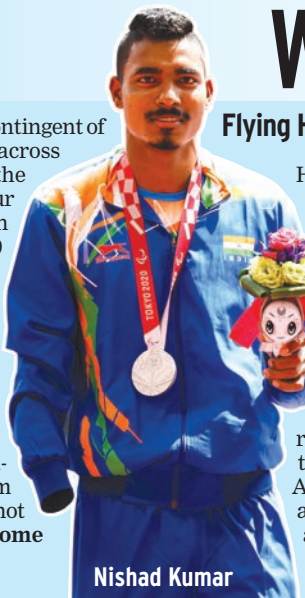
win a medal for the country," he added.

The Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy (PPBA) in Bangalore has recently roped in Korean coach Yoo Yong-sung, a two-time Olympic silver medallist, as their head coach. Sen, who trains at the academy, will benefit from the tactical expertise and practical intelligence of the former Olympic medallist. IANS

2021
ROUND UP

PARALYMPIANS LIFTED INDIA'S SPIRITS WITH BEST EVER MEDAL TALLY

I sent the largest ever contingent of 54 athletes spreading across nine disciplines, to the Tokyo Paralympics. Our athletes returned with an unprecedented haul of 19 medals, lifting our spirits with impressive performances. Be it gold medallist javelin thrower Sumit Antil breaking multiple records in a few minutes or high jumper Nishad Kumar shattering the Asian record and Manish Narwal setting a new Paralympic record in Mixed 50m Pistol shooting, Indians did not fail to impress. A look at some cherished moments...



Nishad Kumar

Flying High: NISHAD KUMAR

Hailing from Himachal Pradesh's Una district, high jumper Nishad Kumar cleared 2.06m to win a silver medal. In the process, he set an Asian record in the men's high jump T47 event. Putting the heart-wrenching tale of losing his right hand in a fodder-cutting machine behind him, Nishad jumped 2.02m in his first attempt in the medal round before reaching 2.06m in his third attempt. It was bettered by American Roderick Townsend with a jump of 2.15m. The son of a mason and housewife, Nishad now looks forward to pursuing his dreams of a Paralympic gold.

Overcoming odds: HARVINDER SINGH

From suffering impairment in his left leg due to medical negligence at age one to losing his mother just 20 days before bagging gold at the 2018 Para Asian Games, Tokyo bronze medallist Harvinder Singh has never allowed the odds to overpower him. In the run-up to the Tokyo Games, he was down with dengue and subsequently Covid-19 affected his training. He converted his farm in Kaithal district of Haryana into a range, and the rest is history. He says his performance in Tokyo was far from perfect. He aims to get there by Paris 2024.



Harvinder Singh

Pairing up: MANISH NARWAL (shooting Gold)

Manish Narwal clinched gold at the Tokyo Paralympics shooting a total of 218.2 in P4 Mixed 50m Pistol SH1 event. The 19-year-old smashed the Paralympic record and holds the world record. The Haryana lad has an impairment in his right hand.

SINGHRAJ ADHANA (Silver)

Singhraj Adhana made it a sensational one-two finish for India at the Tokyo Paralympics when he bagged the silver behind Manish Narwal's gold in P4 Mixed 50m Pistol SH1 event. Adhana, who hails from Bahadurgarh in Haryana, competes with polio-impaired lower limbs.



Manish Narwal (L) and Singhraj Adhana

SUMIT ANTIL: Breaking Records

Six years ago, Sonipat wrestler Sumit Antil lost his leg below the knee in a motorbike accident. But that didn't deter the sportsman and he switched over to para sports, and excelled in F64 javelin throw with a gold medal at the Tokyo Paralympics. Sumit shattered the men's F64 category world record multiple times. He sent the spear to 68.55m in his fifth attempt, which was the best of the day by quite a distance and a new world record. Antil had bettered the previous world record of 62.88m, also set by him, five times on the day.



Sumit Antil