



(25 दिसम्बर, 1924 - 16 अगस्त, 2018)

यह अटल जी का अनुकरणीय नेतृत्व था, जिसने 21वीं शताब्दी के मजबूत एवं खुशहाल भारत की नींव रखी। उनकी दूरदर्शी नीतियों ने विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में प्रत्येक भारतीय के जीवन को छुआ है।

- नरेन्द्र मोदी, प्रधानमंत्री



राष्ट्रवाद के प्रणेता, सुशासन के संवाहक 'भारत रत्न' पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री

अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी जी की 96वीं जयन्ती पर शत-शत नमन

श्रद्धापूर्ण स्मृति में अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी जी की
25 फीट ऊँची कांस्य प्रतिमा (लोक भवन प्रांगण) का **अनावरण**

एवं

अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी चिकित्सा विश्वविद्यालय, उत्तर प्रदेश, लखनऊ
(चक गंजरिया, सुल्तानपुर रोड) का **शिलान्यास**

नरेन्द्र मोदी

प्रधानमंत्री द्वारा

गरिमामयी उपस्थिति

आनंदीबेन पटेल

राज्यपाल, उत्तर प्रदेश

हृदय नारायण दीक्षित

अध्यक्ष, विधानसभा

सुरेश कुमार खन्ना

मंत्री, वित्त, संसदीय कार्य
चिकित्सा शिक्षा, उत्तर प्रदेश

योगी आदित्यनाथ

मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश

केशव प्रसाद मौर्य

उप मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश

डॉ. नीलकंठ तिवारी

राज्य मंत्री, पर्यटन, संस्कृति, धर्मार्थ कार्य (स्वतंत्र प्रभार)
एवं प्रोटोकॉल (MOS), उत्तर प्रदेश

राजनाथ सिंह

रक्षामंत्री, भारत सरकार

डॉ. दिनेश शर्मा

उप मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश

संदीप सिंह

राज्य मंत्री, वित्त, प्राविधिक शिक्षा
चिकित्सा शिक्षा, उत्तर प्रदेश

दिनांक: 25 दिसम्बर, 2019 | समय: अपराह्न 2:45 बजे | स्थान: लोक भवन प्रांगण, लखनऊ

कार चालक सीट बेल्ट अवश्य पहनें।

सूचना एवं जनसम्पर्क विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

When duty conflicts with allegiance



Rajeev Ahuja

A common thread runs across three apparently different stories that were in the news recently. One of the stories is about the IAS officer Ashok Khemka, who has been transferred yet again (this is his 53rd in a span of 28 years!), writing to Haryana CM saying that pliable officers flourish. The second story relates to a call by IAS officers, former and serving, for a rethink on service rules that stop IAS officers from voicing their views in public. The third story is about the vice-president of Janata Dal (United) Prashant Kishor — a political strategist — publicly criticising his party's support to the new citizen law and offering to resign.

So, what is a common thread in these stories other than the fact that they are all from the realm of politics/bureaucracy? The common thread is about the tension that exists between individuals and organisations in which they work or are affiliated to. One of the key reasons for this tension is a divergence between professional integrity of an employee and her/his organisation's conduct or practice. In such cases, maintaining one's professional integrity comes in direct conflict with toeing the organisational line. This puts most professionals in a dilemma whether to stay loyal to their profession or to be loyal to their organisation that give them their monthly pay cheques. And this is true not just in politics or bureaucracy. This kind of tension exists in most private organisations, too.

The reality is that most organisations do resort to various tricks such as partial disclosure of information instead of full disclosure,

misrepresentation of facts, biased interpretation of results, incorrect risk assessments, window dressing or creative accounting and so forth. Employees who work closely with the senior management are privy to such tricks. Faced with such situations, many people take a relaxed view. Some get co-opted into the system, and some adjust to the reality thinking that they are just a small fish in a big pond, why bother. But there are others who get agitated and voice their concern. If their higher-ups aren't sensitive enough, the agitated employees either quit or get fired or get sidelined within an organisation for being outspoken.

Any organisation run by a good management will generally not indulge in unethical practices and will be sensitive to professional views of their employees. Still, a few points from the employee's perspective are worth noting. **Understand the context fully.** Sometimes management may compromise on sharing details for simplification and not necessarily for giving a distorted picture. Employees need to understand the context fully and from the management's perspective before being critical of it. **Distinguish egregious violations from minor deviations.** Egregious violation is a serious thing while minor deviation is not. Even as organisations are focussed on their key clients, the management has to engage with diverse stakeholders. Especially during bad times, even a good management feels the need to do some window dressing without compromising on its core values. So, minor deviations here and there are alright if it allows some space to the

management to look good.

Young employees need to stay focused. Young employees have a steep learning curve as they move from the classroom to the corporate world, from principles to practice. They shouldn't get perturbed when they see a huge divergence between the two different worlds. They have to get seasoned before they can figure out what is serious and what is not. Certainly, they shouldn't be the ones taking on the senior management. Further, young employees need to watch out, lest they are used as tools by their seniors to stir up things. They need to stay focussed. **Don't shy away from raising red flags.** Professional's dilemma is felt less by technical experts and more by those in managerial roles. Those who face it are the ones who are well-informed and better positioned to raise red-flags internally if they notice egregious violations. They shouldn't shy away from doing so and be prepared for the consequences which can go either way. If the consequences are negative, they will at least have a higher self-respect.

Employees do have to give up on certain freedoms. When a person becomes an employee, s/he signs to give up certain part of her or his individuality and commit herself/himself to larger organisational goals. Working or speaking publicly against your organisation while you are still its employee will not reflect you in good light either. So, accept it.

Now, a couple of points from organisation's perspective too. **Encourage good communication and healthy discussion.** A good management maintains a two-way communication with its

staff rather than a top-down communication only. Further, a good management encourages a healthy discussion across internal hierarchy. Even then, differences of opinion may remain. But at least a common understanding gets evolved through a reasoned view that everybody can see through. When internal discussions are frank and open, employees are able to appreciate management's decisions and able to defend those publicly.

Staff loyalty is to be earned and not bought. Organisations can buy staff time but they can't buy staff loyalty. Staff loyalty is to be earned through good policies and practices such as respectful work environment, aligning work allocations with staff interests, rewarding merit and so forth. Generally, good organisations not only have staff-friendly human resource policies but those are also implemented in earnest.

Searching for the right people is not just the prerogative of organisations. People too must search for the right organisations. Unfortunately, not many people experiment with organisations and jobs or with being employed or self-employed. For some people, experimenting with jobs can be a luxury when too many qualified people are chasing too few jobs. But for most others for whom it's not a luxury, even they get comfortable with their management's conduct. Only a few of them turn out like Ashok Khemka. And you don't see too many of them these days!

The writer is a development economist, formerly with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and World Bank



Francis Gonsalves

When God came down to be counted as citizen

Christmas is here. A time of cheer. "Merry Christmas!" Greetings fill the air. Malls glitter with star lights. Santa Claus gifts goodies to kiddies. Merrymakers shop till they drop. There's food, music and gifts, galore. That's Christmas, today.

But, let's journey backward to recall details of Christ's birth. Virgin Mary — or, Miriam as recorded in the Quran — is expecting a child through the power of God's Spirit. She is betrothed to carpenter Joseph, who is forced to rush to Bethlehem, his *janmabhoomi*, to enrol himself and his family into government records.

Today's proof-of-citizenship papers is described by gospel-writer Luke two millennia ago as: "A decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all should be registered... This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria" (2:1-2). In Jesus' times, unlike ours, only the father had to register himself. But how could Joseph leave pregnant Mary alone, unattended in Nazareth, their hometown? So, along with him, Mary went.

Without luxury buses and bullet trains, Joseph and Mary had to travel by foot and perhaps on the back of a donkey for eighty miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Without any GPS, but led by God's providential steering, they probably reached their destination some seven or eight days later, only to find Bethlehem bursting with "sons of the soil" struggling to prove their citizenship.

The saddest line of the Christmas story is: "Mary gave birth to her son, wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7). A manger is a feeding-trough or a food-stall for cattle. Thus, Jesus — whom Christians believe is God's son — was laid upon the hay: cradleless, homeless, helpless, friendless.

As if being born far away from home is not bad enough, baby Jesus' life is threatened by an insecure and violent king, Herod, who, on hearing that a future king was born who'd be a threat to his throne, ordered all male infants to be massacred. Thus, the Holy Family — Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus — had to flee again, to seek refuge in Egypt, 400 miles away. Lest Christ's birth be seen as some unfortunate, unwanted event, we hail the heroes and heroines: Zechariah, Elizabeth, John the Baptist, poor shepherds, wise men from the East, Simeon, Anna, and of course, Mary and Joseph, who, joyful, grateful, generous, selfless, loving and caring, welcomed God's son, Jesus, into our world.

History repeats itself: census, citizenship, refugees, insiders and outsiders. We've broken up God's wonderful world into fragments by building walls, breaking bridges. Say, if God were born in our midst today, would there be room in your "inn" for Him? Christmas blessings to the openhearted!

Francis Gonsalves is a professor of theology. He can be contacted at fragon@gmail.com



High on heels & his hips don't lie



Sandip Soparrkar
Q&A

■ Super-energetic and very sexy, Kian was born in Kolkata but was raised in Dubai and that is where he started to learn street jazz and contemporary dance under the able guidance of his teacher, Sharmila Kamte. Seeing his skills, the ballet school in Dubai gifted him a pair of shoes and offered him a scholarship to learn classical ballet.

What if I told you that high heels were originally made exclusively for men? In a time when stilettos and platform are often associated with female style and female sexuality, this fact might come as a huge surprise but it should not. In fact, for decades high heels found their pride of place on the feet of male soldiers, aristocrats and even royals in different parts of the globe for very specific reasons and when it comes to the surprising history of heeled shoes, that's just the tip of the iceberg. In today's modern times high heels might be more of a women's domain but there are a few men in India who are breaking this stereotype and taking it back to the classical days. One such young man is 22-year-old dancer Anubhav Dutta Gupta aka Kian Gupta.

Super-energetic and very sexy Kian was born in Kolkata but was raised in Dubai and that is where he started to learn street jazz and contemporary dance under the able guidance of his teacher, Sharmila Kamte. Seeing his skills, the ballet school in Dubai gifted him a pair of shoes and offered him a scholarship to learn classical ballet. It has been about five years that he has moved to India and since then he has taken the Indian dance scene by storm. I met with this one-of-a-kind high heel dancer and I am glad that he poured his heart out and spoke to me like no one did.

Seeing women dance in high heels is common, why did you take up high heel dancing?

(Laughs) I am very tall, you see. I stand 5'4" tall; (laughs) well, so I thought dancing in high heels would be best for me to get noticed in this sea of the

dancing world, so I took up dancing in high heels. But you know the origin of the high heels can be traced back to 15th century Persia when male soldiers wore them to help secure their feet in stirrups, Persian migrants brought the high heel shoe trend to Europe, where male aristocrats wore them to appear taller and more formidable. So honestly, if you go to see I am actually just reviving the classical days of men wearing high heels.

How did it all start for you?

My mother says it all started off when she was pregnant with me, I used to kick all the time and since then she knew that her son would either be a footballer or a dancer. But the dance fever began when as a schoolboy, I participated in the UAE leg of the famous dance reality show, *Boogie Woogie*; that is where I met the legendary dancer, Javed Jaffrey, and he introduced me to my teacher, Sharmila Kamte.

What happened after *Boogie Woogie*?

I won the 2nd runner up position, which was a big thing for a non-dancer like me but. I will credit my dancing skills to a few people, of course including my first teacher of street jazz and modern contemporary dance in Dubai, Sharmila Kamte, who moulded me day and night for over five

years. Then in 2013 I moved to India. It was then that Sudarshan Chakravorty of Sapphire Creations dance company took me under his wing and helped me enhance my contemporary dance skills. What was special about being with Sudarshan sir was that I learnt to add Indian elements to my contemporary dance.

How did you then move from Kolkata to Mumbai?

I wanted to explore my art and felt that I needed to go to a bigger city. That is when I learnt about The Terence Lewis Contemporary dance company. I moved to Mumbai in 2016 to learn under Terence. I enrolled in his two-and-a-half-year course and danced day in and day out to further finetune my dancing skills. I overdid and pushed myself so much that during my final presentation I injured myself badly. It took me over three months of regular physiotherapy, acupuncture and acupuncture to overcome my injury. That is when I learnt that I must never push my body beyond its limits.

You have learnt so many dance forms, but then how did high heel dancing come about?

I was always attracted to high heels, plus I did not want to be a group dancer, I always dreamt of being a solo artiste. One day I got a call to perform at the Lalit Hotel, Kitty Su nights, the famous LGBTQ event hosted by Kaishav Suri and Sustain Divgikr. I simply pick up my six inches high heels and stepped onto the dance floor. A

series of shows followed post that one event; soon I was performing almost every weekend, all over the country.

As per you, what really is high heel dancing?

To me, high heel dancing means being sexy, erotic, stimulating and sensual. There is a lot that goes into high heel dancing, there is a particular delicate way to walk, stand, emote, strut, swing one's hips and, of course, dance. I don't dress in drag when I dance in high heels because I do not believe that heels are meant for a woman. I am a man, I dress like a man in trousers and a shirt with open buttons and I simply dance in high heels and that is my specialty. I am man on high heels. (Smiles)

How is the market for high heel dancing in India?

Why only India, all over the world people love watching dances that are sexy and I offer them just that. The performance and show market of high heel dancing is huge in India. I have been performing at clubs, private parties and many such glamorous events. Dance enthusiasts are very keen to experience high heel dancing, so I have been conducting many workshops all over the country. This year I have given over 20 workshops in high heels dancing to young girls, boys, housewives and even corporate executives.

How do you feel when you dance on high heels?

Firstly, I feel thankful to God and to my parents for allowing me to be myself. I feel totally liberated when I slip into my high heels and step onto the dance floor. I

remember visiting Nepal during the earthquake through Unicef and helping out as a social worker and bringing smiles to people's faces. I relate high heels dancing to social work because high heel dancing not only entertains but also empowers people. Once a person gets into his or her high heels and starts to move sensually the sense of outstanding confidence, poise, bravura, style, sophistication and elegance that they develop and inculcate is completely unmatched and exceptional.

I have trained the likes of Madonna, Shakira, Britney Spears and Beyonce Knowles but I can honestly say that this man, Kian, can give these international pop divas a run for their money as his hips don't lie, after slipping into those sexy six-inch heels. Kian Gupta is one artiste who has created a storm on Facebook and Instagram with his unique style of dancing on stilettos. His workshops and shows go full house each time he wears his colorful high heels. So next time you hear that Kian on his high heels is in your city, just grab a chance to see him do his "social work" of empowering people.

Sandip Soparrkar holds a doctorate in world mythology folklore from Pacifica University USA, an honorary doctorate in performing arts from the National American University. He is a World Book Record holder, a well known Ballroom dancer and a Bollywood choreographer who has been honored with three National Excellence awards, one National Achievement Award and Dada Saheb Phalke award by the Government of India. He can be contacted on sandipsoparrkar06@gmail.com.

My mother says it all started off when she was pregnant with me, I used to kick all the time and since then she knew that her son would either be a footballer or a dancer. As a schoolboy, I participated in the UAE leg of *Boogie Woogie*





Threatening gift

US President Donald Trump says he hoped that North Korea would not deliver a missile test as its threatened 'Christmas gift'



Russia is the only country in the world that has hypersonic weapons — Vladimir Putin Russian president

IN BRIEF

Bail to former Pak min in drugs case

Islamabad: Pakistan's Lahore High Court on Tuesday granted bail to former Punjab law minister Rana Sanaullah in a narcotics case lodged after the anti-narcotics force recovered 15 kg heroin from his vehicle. The court also ordered Sanaullah to submit two surety bonds worth ₹1 million each. Justice Chaudhry Mushtaq Ahmed heard the arguments on a post-arrest bail petition filed by advocate Zahid Hussain Bukhari, Ahsan Bhawan and Azam Nazir Tarrar.

Russian airstrikes kill 8 in Syria

Idlib: At least eight people, including five children, were killed on Tuesday in Russian airstrikes on a school in northwest Syria sheltering displaced civilians, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The strikes targeted the village of Jubass near the town of Saraqeb in southern Idlib province, killing civilians sheltering in and near a school. The heightened regime and Russian bombardments on southern Idlib since December 16 have forced tens of thousands of vulnerable people to flee their homes, according to the UN.

7 soldiers killed in Afghan attack

Kabul: An early morning attack on an army checkpoint in northern Afghanistan on Tuesday killed at least seven Afghan soldiers, the defense ministry said. The ministry said that the attack in Balkh province's district of Dawlat Abad also wounded six other members of the security forces. No one claimed responsibility, but the wording of the statement indicated that the authorities blame the Taliban.

Pakistan scientist complaint over rights

Islamabad: Pakistan's top nuclear scientist Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan has filed a petition in the Supreme Court, seeking enforcement of his fundamental rights, including free movement across the country, media reports said on Tuesday. Advocate Zubair Afzal Rana filed the petition on behalf of Abdul Qadeer Khan on Monday against the September 25, 2019 judgement of the Lahore High Court that had rejected his similar plea on the grounds that it lacked jurisdiction in view of the special security measures taken by the state for his protection.

LESS THAN 9L NEW JAPANESE BABIES IN 2019

Tokyo: The number of babies born in Japan fell an estimated 5.9% this year to fewer than 900,000 for the first time since the government started compiling data in 1899, the welfare ministry said on Tuesday. The dwindling number of births will put more strain on welfare finances to support snowballing costs of supporting an ageing population, which would undermine economic growth, analysts say. There were 512,000 more deaths than births this year, the first time the figure has surpassed 500,000, with 864,000 babies born. Last year, 918,400 babies were born. This was the biggest decline in births since 1975, driven by fewer women aged 25 to 39, said a ministry official in charge of compiling the data. The government is hoping for a birth rate of 1.8% — which would appear a tall order given the rate was 1.42% in 2018.

A giant baby Jesus statue in preparation for Christmas Eve in Mexico City, on Tuesday. — AP



Bethlehem decks up for X-mas

Bethlehem, Dec. 24: Pilgrims from around the world gathered on Tuesday in the biblical city of Bethlehem, revered by Christians as the birthplace of Jesus, to celebrate Christmas in the Holy Land. Thousands of Palestinians and foreigners converged on the "little town" in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, with Christmas Eve festivities taking place in and around the Church of the Nativity.

Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, apostolic administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the most senior Roman Catholic official in the Middle East, travelled from the Holy city to Bethlehem on Tuesday afternoon. He was later to lead midnight mass at the church, with Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas expected to attend. Bethlehem is close to Jerusalem, but cut off from the holy city by Israel's separation barrier. After crossing through the wall, Pizzaballa said it was a difficult time but there was reason for 'hope.'

"We see in this period the weakness of politics, enormous economic problems, unemployment, problems in families — so when we look at this reality, we could say that there is nothing to hope for," he said. "On the other side, when I visit families, parishes, communities, I see a lot of commitment for the future. 'Christmas is for us to celebrate the hope.'"

In the square outside the church, a few thousand people watched in the winter sun as Palestinian scouts paraded to the sound of drums. A group of 20 New Zealanders sang carols in front of the 15-metre Christmas tree. In the morning, tourists

PALESTINIAN tourism minister Rula Maayah said it had been a good year, with 3.5m tourists visiting the city

THE STRIKE against government pension reform plans has ruined Christmas travel plans for thousands of the French who are unable to reach loved ones for Christmas Day

queued to visit the grotto inside the church, believed to be the exact site where Jesus was born. "I feel really emotional to be here today, it's wonderful," said Germana, an Italian travelling with her husband and two children.

The first church was built on the site of Jesus's birth in the fourth century, though it was replaced after a fire in the sixth century. This year, celebrations were bolstered by the return of a wooden fragment believed to be from the manger of Jesus.

Sent as a gift to Pope Theodore I in 640, the piece had been in Europe for more than 1,300 years before being returned last month, Francesco Patton, chief custodian for the Holy Land, said. "We venerate the relic because it reminds us of the mystery of incarnation, to the fact that the son of God was born of Mary in Bethlehem more than 2,000 years ago," Patton said at the time. In the square by the church, Palestinian tourism minister Rula Maayah said it had been a good year, with 3.5 million tourists visiting the city.

But fewer Christians from the Gaza Strip were in attendance than in previous years, as Israel had



A 'dunking Santa' (above) gets airborne for a shot after using a trampoline to get the height during a timeout during the second half of an NBA game between the New York Knicks and the Washington Wizards in New York. Finnish artist Klaus Haapaniemi created named 'Astral Sea' (below) is displays for the Xmas decoration at Ginza Six in Tokyo on Tuesday.



granted permits to just around 300 of the some 900 people who applied, said Wadie Abunassar, an adviser to church leaders in the Holy Land. The Palestinian territories of the West Bank and

Gaza are separated by Israeli territory and crossing between them requires hard-to-get permits. Around the world, people were getting ready to ring in the Christmas fes-

tivities. In France, travellers were meanwhile facing more woe in the bitter nearly-three week strike by train drivers fighting government pension reform plans. — AFP

NORTHERN RAILWAY NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Name of work and its location	Tender No.: 30-Elect-47-T-R4-18-19-E3 Provision of lift in 15 new patients cabin and separate food lift in Central Hospital, Northern Railway, New Delhi.
Approx cost of the works in	Rs. 56.59 lacs
Address of the office	Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.
Earnest Money	Rs. 113200.00
Date & time of submission of tender	20.01.2020, 15.00 Hrs.
Opening of tender	20.01.2020, 15.00 Hrs.
Website & notice board	www.ireps.gov.in & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi

4115/2019

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that a girl namely Mahak, D/o: Arshad Khan, R/o: WZ 294, Tihar Village, Delhi has been reported missing/kidnapped since 05.12.2019 from her house. In this regard FIR No. 547/19 dated 07.12.2019 u/s 363 IPC has been registered at P.S. Hari Nagar, Delhi. The description of missing/ kidnapped girl is as under:

Name: Mahak, Age: About 16 Years, Height: 5'4", Face: Oval, Complexion: Wheatish, Built: Medium, Wearing: Mehroon colour suit-salwar, and white sweater.

If anyone have any information about this missing/ kidnapped girl please inform P.S. Hari Nagar, Delhi.

Web: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639

SHO
Police Station, Hari Nagar, Delhi
Ph: 011-28525719, 8750871128,
8368215758, 9212310564

DP/8545/W/19

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that this person Named: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: 50 Years, Sex: Male, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Wheatish, Wearing: White Linenar Shirt & Black Colour Lower, Found Dead at Footpath Near Railway Hospital, SPM Marg, in the Area of Ps. Lahori Gate, Delhi on 18.12.2019.

In this regard a DD No. 38-A, dated 18.12.2019 has been lodged at P.S. Lahori Gate, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far.

Any person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform to the following.

SHO
P.S. Lahori Gate, Delhi
Ph.: 011-23953776, 8750870122

DP/802/N/19

Queen Elizabeth II calls 2019 'bumpy'

London, Dec. 24: Queen Elizabeth II called 2019 "quite bumpy" in a Christmas message at the end of a chaotic year which saw Britain feud over its split from the European Union and her scandal-plagued son Prince Andrew withdraw from public life.



Queen Elizabeth II

The 93-year-old monarch's received good news when husband Prince Philip checked out of a London hospital after a four-night stay in time to join the royal family for Christmas. But the year was filled with disappointments for the queen — a seminal figure in British public life who assumed the throne in 1952 and is beloved by much of the nation. None may have been more bitter than a calamitous BBC interview in which her second son Andrew tried to dis-

granted himself from American paedophile Jeffrey Epstein. Andrew promised to "step back from public duties" after his denial of having sex with one of Epstein's alleged victims was ridiculed in the UK media and reportedly criticised in Buckingham Palace. The Queen's traditional address — to be aired in full on Christmas Day — will point to the life of Jesus as an example of

"how small steps taken in faith and in hope can overcome long-held differences and deep-seated divisions".

The remarks were widely interpreted as a reference to the Brexit debate that has torn Britain apart since it voted to leave the EU in a 2016 referendum.

"The path, of course, is not always smooth, and may at times this year have felt quite bumpy, but small steps can make a world of difference," the queen will say. Royal commentators said the queen's use of the word "bumpy" marked her most explicit admission of turmoil since her headline-grabbing description of 1992 as an "annus horribilis".

The marriages of three of her children fell apart and her beloved Windsor Castle nearly went up in flames in that "horrible

year". The Queen found herself dragged into the tortuous political drama of Brexit when she approved PM Boris Johnson's request to suspend parliament in August. Critics claimed it was an attempt to silence opponents to his EU withdrawal plans. The Supreme Court subsequently ruled that Johnson's request had been unlawful and many people blamed him for making the queen look bad. The queen was also rumoured to have been disappointed by her grandson Prince Harry and his American former actress wife Meghan Markle.

The young couple made waves by speaking out about their struggle with life in the public eye and then suing three British newspapers for prying into their private lives. — AFP

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE

Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, Northern Railway, Moradabad for & on behalf of the President of India, e-tender for the following work:-

S. No.	Name of Work & Place	Area (In sq. meter)	Reserve Price for 01 year (excluding GST)	Earnest Money (2% of Reserve price of 3 years)	Completion period	Cost of Tender Form (With 18% GST)
1.	Contract for Car Parking at Shahjahanpur 1st Railway Station ('A' Category)	484.04 Sq.m	Rs. 1,95,840/-	Rs. 11,800/- to be paid through online payment gateway	3 Years	Rs.2,360/- to be paid through online payment gateway
2.	Contract for Cycle Scooter, Motor-Cycle Stand at Hapur Hind Entry Railway Station ('A' Category)	450 Sq.m	Rs. 1,95,996/-	Rs. 11,800/- to be paid through online payment gateway	3 Years	Rs.2,360/- to be paid through online payment gateway
3.	Contract for Cycle Scooter, Motor-Cycle Stand at Moradabad Railway Station ('A' Category)	948.72 Sq.m	Rs. 10,27,142/-	Rs. 61,700/- to be paid through online payment gateway	3 Years	Rs.3,540/- to be paid through online payment gateway
4.	Contract for Cycle Scooter, Motor-Cycle Stand at Nagina Railway Station ('D' Category)	160 Sq.m	Rs. 2,08,003/-	Rs. 12,500/- to be paid through online payment gateway	3 Years	Rs.2,360/- to be paid through online payment gateway
5.	Contract for Cycle Scooter, Motor-Cycle Stand at Bijoor Railway Station ('D' Category)	180 Sq.m	Rs. 24,576/-	Rs. 1,500/- to be paid through online payment gateway	3 Years	Rs.1,180/- to be paid through online payment gateway
6.	Contract for Cycle Scooter, Motor-Cycle Stand at Lakser Railway Station ('B' Category)	132.02 Sq.m	Rs. 2,73,456/-	Rs. 16,500/- to be paid through online payment gateway	3 Years	Rs.2,360/- to be paid through online payment gateway
7.	Contract for Cycle Scooter, Motor-Cycle Stand (For Staff Parking) at Moradabad Railway Station ('A' Category)	288 Sq.m	Rs. 82,164/-	Rs. 5,000/- to be paid through online payment gateway	3 Years	Rs.1,180/- to be paid through online payment gateway

Address of website from which tender documents can be downloaded: www.ireps.gov.in (E-tendering mode.) Last Date & time of submission: Upto 14.00 hrs on 16.01.2020 and will be open on the same day.

Note: The pre bid conference regarding to the tender will be held at 09.01.20 in DRMs Office, Commercial Branch, Moradabad at 11.00 am. Single packet system shall be adopted in this tender. 2. In case of any difficulty helpdesk and learning centre available on the website IREPS may be approached. 3. Tender (e) are advised to read tender document carefully before participating in the tender. Tender Notice No. 21-10/Parking/MB/2019/BC Dt. 24.12.2019.

4120/19

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE



Tebas triumphs

Javier Tebas wins the Spanish league presidential elections for a third time, will remain in the office for another four years

Russians hope to play for the flag

Moscow, Dec. 24: The Russian Olympic Committee said Tuesday it expected that Russian athletes would take part in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics Games under the national flag despite a four-year doping ban. "The Russian Olympic Committee is a rightful member of the Olympic movement," its president Stanislav Pozdnyakov told reporters after a meeting. "Therefore we have every reason to believe that we will put together a team for Tokyo and do everything in our power for this team to perform under the Russian tricolour," he added.

The World Anti-Doping Agency on December 10 banned Russia for four years from major global events, including the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, over manipulated doping data. WADA accused Moscow of falsifying data from a doping testing laboratory that was handed over to investigators earlier this year. Russia has said it would contest the ban, with President Vladimir Putin slamming the sanctions as politically motivated. Speaking on Tuesday, Pozdnyakov confirmed that the Russian Olympic Committee would support the decision of its supervisory board to defy the WADA ban. Last week RUSADA anti-doping agency said it had "made a decision not to agree" with the four-year ban by the World Anti-Doping Agency's decision. The decision will have to be communicated to WADA before the end of the month, triggering the appeal process in the Lausanne-based Court of Arbitration for Sport. Under the sanctions, Russian sportsmen and women will still be allowed to compete at the Olympics next year and the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, but only as neutrals and if they can demonstrate that they were not part of what WADA believes was a state-sponsored system of doping. — AFP

● The Russian Olympic Committee expected that Russian athletes would take part in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics Games under the national flag despite a four-year doping ban. ● Russia has said it would contest the ban, with President Vladimir Putin slamming the sanctions.



Jamal Murray (second from right) of the Denver Nuggets puts up a shot over Aron Baynes of the Phoenix Suns during the final moments of their NBA game at Talking Stick Resort Arena in Phoenix, Arizona, on Monday. The Nuggets defeated the Suns 113-111. — AFP

Pacers edge Raptors

Aaron, Myles, Warren help Indiana triumph

Los Angeles, Dec. 24: Aaron Holiday finished with 19 points and made two clutch three-pointers in overtime as the Indiana Pacers snapped the Toronto Raptors five-game winning streak with a 120-115 win on Monday. Myles Turner and TJ Warren also had 24 points each, and Holiday added 10 assists in the win over the injury-depleted Raptors who were coming off their biggest comeback win in franchise history. "It's a big win for us," said Holiday, who finished with 19 points in getting the start at point guard for the injured Malcolm Brogdon. "It's fun playing with emotion, especially in big games."

Kyle Lowry had 30 points and nine assists for Toronto, who defeated the Dallas Mavericks on Sunday after trailing by 30 points in the third quarter. "We gutted it out, we played our butts off and gave ourselves a chance to win at the end," Lowry said of the Raptors. But the Raptors, who were missing several starters, ran out of gas on Monday in front of the crowd of 17,100 at Bankers Life Fieldhouse arena in Indianapolis.

This time, Toronto was forced to come back from a 15-point deficit but couldn't pull out the victory. Domantas Sabonis scored 12 points and grabbed 17 rebounds for Indiana. Jeremy Lamb and TJ McConnell both had 12 points. Lamb missed the two previous games with a groin problem. Serge Ibaka had 23 points and nine rebounds, Fred VanVleet contributed 21 points and 11 assists, and OG Anunoby scored 15 points and 12 rebounds for Toronto. The Pacers got three-



Jamal Murray (right) of the Denver Nuggets looks to pass guarded by Ricky Rubio of the Phoenix Suns during the first half of the NBA game at Talking Stick Resort Arena in Phoenix, Arizona, on Monday. — AFP

pointers from Holiday and Warren to lead by two with 41 seconds remaining in regulation. Lowry's layup tied it 107-107 with 34 seconds left. Lowry then took the final long shot of regulation but missed badly. Holiday's three-pointer gave Indiana a three-point lead with just over two minutes left in overtime. He made another three-point dagger with 54 seconds left to increase the lead to four. This was the first meet-

ing between the teams this season after Toronto won two of three from Indiana last season. The Pacers beat the visiting Raptors 110-106 on January 23 in the final meeting, which saw Indiana star Victor Oladipo suffer a serious knee injury in the second quarter. Oladipo has yet to play this season as he is still rehabbing that injury. The Raptors are playing without key injured players, comprising Pascal Siakam (groin), Marc

Gasol (hamstring) and Norman Powell (shoulder). Elsewhere, Ben Simmons notched a triple-double, and the Philadelphia 76ers handed the host Detroit Pistons their fifth straight loss 125-109. Tobias Harris made 14 of 21 field goal attempts, including four three-pointers and finished with 35 points. Simmons tallied 16 points, 13 rebounds and 17 assists in the win. Furkan Korkmaz came

off the bench to score 21 points, and Joel Embiid had 20 points and eight rebounds for the Sixers, who shot 54 percent from the field. Pistons star Andre Drummond was not in the starting lineup. But he came off the bench and scored a team-high 27 points with nine rebounds and three assists. Blake Griffin shot two-for-14 from the field and scored eight points in the loss as the Pistons trailed 60-52 at halftime. — AFP

Indian shooters leave their mark in 2019 season

New Delhi, Dec. 24: Hitting the target with monotonous regularity, Indian shooters' dominance in a phenomenal 2019, at times, made world events look like domestic tournaments. At the forefront of the incredible showing was an extremely talented youth brigade that knew no fear. Some of them studied hard, did their homework, appeared for exams, practised harder and then shot, to win. While some dominated the range first and wrote their papers later. And then, they were back at the range again, working on their game to continue what has been an unprecedented upswing. In terms of overall medals, the tally stood at 21 gold, six silver and

three bronze as India topped all the Rifle-Pistol World Cups and Finals this year. The number of Olympic quotas, which now stands at a record 15, is not only a reflection of the country's rapid rise in the sport over the last one year but also sets up the shooters nicely for a record haul in Tokyo Olympics, after the meltdown at Rio de Janeiro. Indian shooting's best show at the Olympics remains the two medals won at London in 2012, but if the shooters' exploits in recent months are anything to go by, the country can easily emulate or better that in Tokyo. However, the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI), having endured

an unpleasant experience in Rio, is far from basking in its shooters' glory yet. Impressed the association is with the performance that may have exceeded expectations but, instead of celebrating, it is looking at ways to protect them from "exploitation and distractions". That called for taking some very tough decisions, including banning the shooters from signing any fresh commercial deals in the run-up to the Olympic Games, a move that may not have found favours with many. Besides the shooters, the federation has also worked extensively well towards bringing the sport to where it is today. — PTI



Indian shooters (from left) Anjum Modgil, Mehuli Ghosh and Apurvi Chandela in this file photo.

'Players need to be protected'

Glasgow, Dec. 24: Rangers manager Steven Gerrard has urged Scottish football authorities to make a "severe example" of bottle-throwing supporters if they are serious about protecting players.

Gers left-back Borna Barisic only narrowly escaped a potentially serious injury during a win away to Hibernian on Friday when a glass bottle was hurled at him from the Easter Road stands. This was not the first time the Edinburgh club's East Stand has provided the backdrop for a violent incident. Rangers captain James Tavernier was confronted by a pitch invader in March, just a week after a glass bottle was thrown at Celtic winger Scott Sinclair. Gerrard believes the repeat nature of these incidents has only increased the likelihood for further attacks, with the former Liverpool and England midfielder saying now was the time for stern measures. "It's a crazy decision to throw a bottle onto a football pitch," Gerrard said. "The damage you could do is unthinkable. If the punishment isn't severe enough then people will continue to make bad decisions from the terraces." — STEVEN GERRARD, Rangers' manager



It's a crazy decision to throw a bottle onto a football pitch. The damage you could do is unthinkable. If the punishment isn't severe enough then people will continue to make bad decisions from the terraces. — STEVEN GERRARD, Rangers' manager

throwing missiles last Friday to the police. A club statement added "those who misbehave should know we will leave no stone unturned to identify them and bring them to book". Victory over Hibs left second-placed Rangers five points behind arch-rivals Celtic, the reigning Scottish Premiership champions. Celtic, however, have played a game more than Rangers. Gerrard's men will look to cut that deficit further at home to Kilmarnock on Boxing Day before travelling across Glasgow to Parkhead for an Old Firm derby against Celtic on Sunday. — AFP



We gutted it out, we played our backs off and gave ourselves a chance to win in the end.

— Kyle Lowry, Basketball player of Toronto Raptors after their win

SHORT TAKES

Lachini is the new Fiorentina boss

Milan: Struggling Serie 'A' side Fiorentina named Giuseppe Lachini, a seasoned professional well-known on the Italian coaching circuit, as their new manager on Monday to replace Vincenzo Montella, who was fired at the weekend. The 55-year-old old has led four different clubs out of Serie 'B' into the top flight, although he has never coached any of Italy's biggest clubs or won a major title. Montella, who was in charge for eight months, was sacked on Saturday after a 4-1 home defeat by AS Roma which extended Fiorentina's winless run to seven matches and left them 15th in Serie 'A' with 17 points, three clear of the relegation zone. "The current situation in the table forced us to change the coach," said Rocco Comisso, the club's billionaire U.S.-born owner. "We chose Lachini because he is a great man. Now we have to stick together and get back on the right track". Lachini won promotion to Serie 'A' with Chievo in 2008, Brescia in 2010, Sampdoria in 2012 and Palermo in 2014 and has also coached Venezia, Cesena, Vicenza, Piacenza, Siena, Udinese and Sassuolo. — Reuters

Greek referees continue strike

Athens: Greek Super League referees announced on Monday they were bringing forward their strike action by a week to January 4-5 in protest at the latest assault on one of their number. Hooligans armed with fire-crackers attacked the home of one of the match officials in charge of the Volos-Olympiakos scoreless draw on Sunday. The Greek football federation strongly condemned "the new, mafia-type attack on a Super League referee". Olympiakos protested about "bad officiating" and filed a lawsuit against the five referees, charging them with bribery. The Piraeus club have also sent protest letters to football governing bodies UEFA and FIFA, claiming "a deliberate and surgically precise alteration of the outcome of a match in which VAR was used". The Greek federation has suspended the five officials pending the outcome of their investigation. "The implementation of the VAR system in the match was undoubtedly below expectations," the federation said. — AFP

ROWERS, WIGAN PLAY OUT A DRAW

London: Blackburn Rovers missed a chance to narrow the gap to the England Championship play-off places with a goalless draw at home to Wigan on Monday where the greater concern was a worrying injury to Bradley Dack. Rovers' leading scorer this returned from suspension to make his 250th appearance for Rovers in this all-Lancashire clash but Dack's match ended in the 65th minute when he was left clutching his knee after landing awkwardly. He was then taken off the field on a stretcher after several minutes' treatment. Victory would have seen Rovers go level on points with sixth-placed Brentford — the top two at the end of the regular season gain automatic entry into the lucrative Premier League with the other promotion place decided by a series of play-off matches involving the next four clubs. Tony Mowbray's side came close to a goal, Danny Graham's header hitting the woodwork in the second half before Lewis Holtby was denied in stoppage time. Blackburn's former Wigan goalkeeper Christian Walton made two good saves. — AFP



No warm-up

US Open champion Bianca Andreescu pulls out of her Australian Open warm-up tournament the Auckland WTA Classic with a knee injury



He can play anywhere, he can play the whole midfield

— Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, Manchester United manager on Paul Pogba after he returned from a long injury lay-off

SHORT TAKES

Tapi wins Delhi feature race

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, DEC. 24

Tapi won the December Plate, the feature event at the Delhi races on Tuesday.

RESULTS

1st race: The Christmas Tree Plate Div-I (1000 mts)

1. Race Ka Raja, 2. Autumn Gold, 3. Darjeeling

2nd race: The Christmas Tree Plate Div-II (1000 mts)

1. Miss Zachary, 2. Venum, 3. Mr Stunning

3rd race: The Winter Plate (1600 mts)

1. Golden Magic, 2. Udaan, 3. Walk On Brave

4th race: The December Plate (1100 mts)

1. Tapi, 2. Ashwa Jagira, 3. Master Critiano

5th race: The Christmas Cup Div-I (1100 mts)

1. Conquering Bid, 2. Hot Blood, 3. Acker Bilk

6th race: The Christmas Cup Div-II (1100 mts)

1. Marks Man, 2. Solarium, 3. Golden Guinea

Big boost in Aus Open prize money

Melbourne: Big pay rises are in store for players at January's Australian Open with organisers Tuesday announcing a 13.6 percent boost in the total purse to Aus\$71 million (US\$49.1 million). The winners of the men's and women's titles at the first Grand Slam of the year will both take home Aus\$4.12 million, only a small increase from a year ago. But players beaten in earlier rounds do much better. Anyone crashing out in round one will receive Aus\$90,000, up 20 percent, while second round players get a 21.9 percent hike to Aus\$128,000. Tournament director Craig Tiley said every round would enjoy double digit percentage increases, bar the finalists. Prize money has increased 61.4 percent over the last five years, broadly in line with other the Grand Slams. The Australian Open gets underway at Melbourne Park on January 20. — AFP

ATK'S UNBEATEN HOME RUN AT RISK AGAINST BFC

Kolkata: They have been in tremendous form but maintaining their unbeaten run at home will not be easy when former champions ATK face defending champions Bengaluru FC in an Indian Super League match here on Wednesday. The Kolkata franchise has scored the most goals — 10 — at the Saltlake Stadium and their defence too has been at their resolute best but their record will be put to test against Carles Cuadrat's Bengaluru FC who are unbeaten away this season. Third-placed ATK who are a point behind the Blues (16 points) are smarting after a loss to FC Goa and a disappointing 2-2 draw against bottom-placed Hyderabad FC. Terming Bengaluru FC, as the best team of the season, coach Antonio Habas said, "For us it's a very important match. We can know our level by playing against last season's champions. It's very important for me and my players." Roy Krishna is ATK's primary weapon up front with eight goals to his name — five of them coming in their last four outings. With the likes of David Williams, Javi Hernandez, Mandi Sosa and Edu Garcia in the line-up, Krishna will be confident of getting good support. Head to head, Bengaluru have a great record having won all four games. In fact, ATK have scored just one goal past Bengaluru in those matches. Bengaluru's defence has been exemplary this season as well, having conceded just five goals in nine matches. — PTI



Liverpool players and team management toss their Christmas hats.

— LIVERPOOL

All eyes on Liverpool

Reds face Vardy threat on festive return to EPL

London, Dec. 24: Liverpool, newly crowned Club World Cup winners, return to their main task — fighting for their first league title in 30 years — when they face their closest challengers Leicester City on Thursday.

The Boxing Day clash of the top-two, at Leicester's King Power stadium, headlines a full programme of festive fixtures and despite Leicester's 3-1 reverse at Manchester City on Saturday, Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp is aware of the dangers that his side face.

Leicester manager Brendan Rodgers, who was replaced by Klopp at Anfield, has built a team that has won as many games as Pep Guardiola's City, 12 out of 18. They have lost just three times and in Jamie Vardy they have the league's top scorer with 17 goals.

"We will try to stop Vardy. He's a massive striker, an exceptional striker. One of the top three since I've been in England," said Klopp. "He's difficult to defend, always on the shoulder... Playing the offside line, really dangerous. The only thing you can do is



Liverpool defenders Virgil van Dijk (left) and Andrew Robertson share a light moment during their training at Anfield on Tuesday.

— LIVERPOOL

avoid the passes to him and that's what we'll try. "But Leicester is not only Jamie Vardy. Brendan has done an excellent job there and they're a proper top class team. The quality they have is exceptional,"

added the German. Klopp will need to draw on his strength in depth given that midfielder Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain suffered an ankle injury in the extra-time win over Flamengo in the Club World Cup final in Qatar.

With Dejan Lovren, Joel Matip and Brazilian Fabinho all sidelined, Joe Gomez is likely to partner Virgil van Dijk in the center of defence.

Manchester United, smarting from their defeat at Watford on Sunday, are

at home to Newcastle United, a game which could see Paul Pogba return to the starting lineup.

The French midfielder, who had been out with an ankle injury since September, came on as a substitute at Watford but could start against Steve Bruce's side. "He is the best all-round midfielder in the world," said United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, who admits that it can be tricky to designate a precise midfield duty for the former Juventus player.

"He can perform all roles, but if I play him low, (some people will say) he should have played high and, if I play him high, I should have played low. There's always going to be that discussion with him. But it's great to have him back," he said.

Two clubs will have new managers in charge for the first time with Mikel Arteta's Arsenal at struggling Bournemouth and Carlo Ancelotti taking the reigns of Everton at home to Burnley.

Third-placed Manchester City face a tough trip to Wolves on Friday. — Reuters

POGBA HAILED AS 'BEST MIDFIELDER IN WORLD'

London, Dec. 24: Paul Pogba has been hailed as the "best midfielder in the world" by Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer after the Frenchman returned from a long injury lay-off.

The World Cup winner was in action for United for the first time since late September as a substitute in their chastening 2-0 defeat at Watford on Sunday. He could be in the starting team against Newcastle on Thursday as Solskjaer desperately seeks the creativity the team needs to break down stubborn opposition defences. "Let's see how he reacts to this, how he feels," said Solskjaer.

"He did really well when he came on. Big, big plus and it might be that we do get him in from the start." Pogba, who had only played twice since the end of August due to an ankle injury, was introduced on Sunday with United already trailing by two goals and went close to scoring during a late attacking flurry from the visitors.

Pogba, who had only played twice since the end of August due to an ankle injury, was introduced on Sunday with United already trailing by two goals and went close to scoring during a late attacking flurry from the visitors.

"He can play anywhere, he can play the whole midfield," said Solskjaer.

"He's a box-to-box midfielder. He can drop deep, get it, play long passes. He can get it higher up and combine like he did today."

"That's the beauty of having Paul, because he is the best all-round midfielder in the world," added the United boss, who has said the 26-year-old will not be leaving in the January transfer window despite links with Real Madrid.

Solskjaer said he was looking for a reaction from his players against Newcastle after United again failed to turn dominance of possession into a positive result at Watford. — AFP

Paire, Karlovic to return; Philipp ready for debut

Pune, Dec. 24: Stylish Frenchman and world number 24 Benoit Paire will headline the field at the Tata Open Maharashtra but South African Kevin Anderson will not return to defend his title at India's only ATP 250 event, starting February 3.

Last edition's runner-up Ivo Karlovic will return for the third edition of the tournament, which has now been shifted to first week of February instead of being a season-opener.

With the ATP reshuffling calendar to accommodate the ATP Cup, which is happening for the first time, the tournament will now be held after the Australian Open.

Former Wimbledon quarterfinalist with a career-high rank of 16, Germany's Philipp Kohlschreiber will make his debut at the event.

The 30-year-old Paire, who touched a career-high ranking of 18 in 2016 and won two ATP titles in 2018, had reached the quarter-finals in the previous edition.

Paire has been in sizzling form in 2019, winning titles at Lyon and Marrakech.

Kohlschreiber, who has eight ATP tour titles spread over three different surfaces, had upset world number one Novak

TATA OPEN MAHARASHTRA



Last edition's runner-up Ivo Karlovic will be in quest for the title at the third edition of the Tata Open Maharashtra as the event kicks off from February 3.

Djokovic at the Indian Wells Masters this year. "This is a very special edition when we are celebrating 25 years of ATP Tour in India. The tournament has always had a rich legacy of champions playing here and the silver jubilee year will be no different as we hope

to roll out yet another memorable edition of thrilling tennis action," said Prashant Sutar, the tournament director. Czech Republic's Jiri Vesely who upset world number five Alexander Zverev at Wimbledon this year would be the one to watch out. — PTI

FED CUP | TENNIS

SANIA RETURNS TO INDIAN TEAM AFTER 4 YEARS

New Delhi, Dec. 24: Doubles star Sania Mirza on Tuesday returned to the Indian Fed Cup team after four years as she was named in the five-member squad, which features country's top singles player Ankit Raina.

Sania last played Fed Cup in 2016 and has been out of action since October 2017 as she took a two-year break to start a family.

Riya Bhatia (379), Rutuja Bhosale (466) and Karman Kaur Thandi (568) also figured in the squad. Ranked 180 in the WTA singles chart, Ankit is way above her compatriots. Former Davis Cupper Vishal Uppal will be the captain of the side while former Fed Cupper Ankit Bhambrani has been named the coach of the side, which will have Sowjanya Bavisetti as the reserve player. Sania is making a comeback at Hobart International with Ukraine's Nadia Kichenok, the current world number 38.

Before her sabbatical, Sania won six doubles Grand Slam titles — including three mixed — achieved the number one rank, won medals at multi-disciplinary events apart from laying hands on a year-end WTA Finale title with Swiss great Martina Hingis. — PTI

SENIOR AND JUNIOR SHOOTING NATIONALS

Manu, Anish make clean sweep

Bhopal, Dec. 24: Commonwealth Games champions Manu Bhaker and Anish Bhanwala swept the senior and junior gold medals in the women's 10m air pistol and men's 25m rapid fire pistol events at the National Shooting Championships here on Tuesday.

The 17-year-old Bhaker, representing Haryana, clinched four gold medals (individual and team events in senior and junior) on Tuesday to add to her two won earlier in the competition and also equalled the qualification national record en-route a facile victory.



Anish Bhanwala

Her state-mate Anish, also 17, won both the individual and team gold medals in the senior and junior men's categories of his event to stamp his dominance. Bhaker, who has also won India one of its 15 Tokyo Olympics quota

births, shot 588 to top qualifications and equal the record set by Annu Raj Singh in the South Asian Games. She then shot a 243 to emerge triumphant in the eight-woman final.

Devanshi Dhama was way back with 237.8 and another Tokyo quota winner Yashaswini Singh Deswal won bronze with 217.7.

Bhanwala shot 28 in the rapid fire final to leave behind Bhavesh Shekhawat of Rajasthan who ended with 26 while Chandigarh's Vijayveer Sidhu came third with 22 hits.

Bhanwala had also topped the qualifying with a score of 582. — PTI



Manu Bhaker (Centre) poses on the podium with her gold medal.