THE Hans India

"If Pakistan does not have a valid reason to justify withdrawing from the big match (T20 WC) against India, or if they cannot show grounds for breaching the contract, then action will be taken by the ICC Board. However, it should be something that ensures no other team in the future also considers doing that,"

- Sunil Gavaskar

Sports Nation

Squash on Fire Open in Washington

Anahat wins maiden PSA Bronze-level title

WASHINGTON: Teenage sensation and seventh seed Anahat Singh defeated top seed and World No 10. Georgina Kennedy of England with scores of 12-10, 11-5, 11-7 in the Squash on Fire Open final, earning her first PSA Bronze-level title.

This is the biggest title of young Anahat's career and her 15th overall on the PSA Tour, where the Indian world No. 31 has competed in 26 tournaments.

Kennedy had beaten Singh 3-0 in their only previous encounter at this season's Canadian Women's Open, and she made a strong start here, too, bringing up two game balls at 10-8 in the first.

But Anahat was then 3-2 down in game two, but from that moment on, barely took a step back, mixing her

game up well with attacking boasts, sharp kills and well-placed lobs.

A run of four straight points moved the teenager 6-3 in front, and she would only lose another two points in the game, moving within one game of glory.

A fast start to game three was always likely to be key to Kennedy's hopes of staging a comeback, but instead it was Anahat who charged out of the blocks, moving 5-1 in front in less than two minutes.

5-1 soon became 10-6 and four match balls, and while the first came and went, Anahat would not have to wait long for her moment of glory, with a clinical forehand boast winner providing a fitting finale to a sensational week. "I'm extremely happy. I knew I wanted to do well in these events, get my ranking up and also put on a performance, and I'm glad I was able to do that this time," Anahat said after her victory against the World No 10.

She has been in excellent form this season, reaching the semi-finals of the Silver-level Canadian Women's Open, finishing runner-up at the British Junior Open Under-19, helping India win the first-ever Squash World Cup, and claiming the Daly College Cup PSA title in Indore.

At the British Junior Open, she lost a tight four-game final to France's Lauren Baltayan (9-11, 11-7, 3-11, 9-11), marking her ninth BJO final across different age groups and underscoring her rising stature on the PSA Tour.

India qualify for Tent Pegging WC finals

New Delhi

INDIA on Monday qualified for the Tent Pegging World Cup Championships to be held in Jordan in November 2026 after a strong showing in the qualifying competition, where they won a total of six medals, including four team medals and two individual honours.

The Indian team comprised Dfr Sandeep Kumar, Dfr Dhanraj Sirsat, Dfr Bonge Ganesh Baliram and ASI Jitender Singh, all of whom contributed to the team medals across events.

Competing against traditional powerhouses such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Norway and Indonesia, the Indian contingent delivered a consistent performance across lance, sword and combined events to secure an overall bronze medal and confirm their place in the

World Cup finals in Jordan.

India opened their medal tally on January 29 with a team silver in the lance event, while Dfr Dhanraj Sirsat of the Rashtriya Rifles clinched an individual bronze in the same discipline.

The following day proved to be the highlight of the campaign as India struck gold in the team sword event. Sirsat added his second individual medal with a silver in the sword event, underlining his standout performance in the competition.

On January 31, the Indian team claimed bronze medals in the combined Lemon & Pegs, Rings & Pegs and Relay events. The cumulative results earned India an overall team bronze, sealing qualification for the World Cup championships.

The team's coach-cum-manager Tarsem Singh Warraich, whose appointment caused a controversy as he is facing rape allegations, expressed satisfaction with the outcome, saying the sustained effort of the young riders has paid. "Each day we won a medal, our athletes were consistent. It's a team effort," said Warraich.

Tata Steel Masters

Nodirbek wins title, Gukesh finishes joint 8th

WIJK AAN ZEE (THE NETHERLANDS): Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan clinched the Tata Steel Masters title with a black-piece victory against out-of-form Arjun Erigaisi while world chess champion D Gukesh emerged as the best Indian with a joint eighth finish as the tournament concluded here on Monday.

Gukesh drew with Vincent Keymer of Germany in the final round to end as the top performing Indian on 6.5 points. But, his fifty per cent score was below par and the Indian ace slipped below the 2750 rating mark.

R Praggnanadhaa also drew the last round with Jorden van Foreest of the Netherlands to end on 5.5 points and there are some lessons to be learnt for the Indian if the performance here is any indication ahead of the Candidates tournament.

Erigaisi had the biggest deficit in terms of rating as he lost a whopping 29 points to find himself out of top 10 in world rankings in a while.

In fact, Gukesh is the only Indian player ranked at number 10 on the live rating list and much to the surprise of the chess buffs, there is no Indian above 2750 ratings. Nodirbek scored a commendable nine points out of 13 games while his junior compatriot and World Cup winner Javokhir Sindarov made it an Uzbek domination by finishing second a half point behind.

Results Final round (Indians unless specified): R Praggnanandhaa (5.5) drew with Jorden van Foreeest (Ned, 7.5); Arjun Erigaisi (4.5) lost to Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 9); Vladimir Fedoseev (Slo, 6.5) beat Aravindh Chithambaram (4.5); Thai Dai Van Nguyen (Cze 3) lost to Javokhir Sindarov (Uzb, 8.5); D Gukesh (6.5) drew with Vincent Keymer (Ger, 7.5); Matthias Bluebaum (Ger, 7) drew with Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus (Tur, 7); Anish Giri (Ned, 6.5) drew with Hans Moke Niemann (Usa, 7.5).

India women brace for stiff test, men eye podium at Asia Team C'ships

QINGDAO (CHINA): A depleted Indian women's side will face an uphill task in defending its crown without talisman PV Sindhu, while the men will bank on a seasoned core to mount a strong podium challenge at the Badminton Asia Team Championships beginning here on Tuesday.

India had scripted history by clinching their maiden women's team gold in the last edition in Malaysia, but Sindhu's withdrawal due to a niggle has dealt a significant blow to their medal hopes.

The absence of the two-time Olympic medallist leaves the younger crop, led by Tanvi Sharma, with the responsibility of carrying the campaign.

The 17-year-old from Punjab was part of the champion team in 2024 although she didn't get to play any

games. In two years, Tanvi has emerged as the next big hope in women's singles with a silver medal at World Junior Championships in Guwahati, and a final finish at the US Open Super 300.

Unnati Hooda, 18, too is coming into the tournament after a successful 2025 season where she achieved a career-high world ranking of No. 23 and defeated Sindhu at the China Open. The youngest Indian ever to win a BWF Super 100 title, Unnati ended 2025 with a title at the Odisha Masters.

T20 WC warm-up matches

Tilak, Mayank included in India 'A' squad

MUMBAI: Swashbuckling batter Tilak Varma was on Monday named in the India A squad for the T20 World Cup warm-up matches, while tearaway pacer Mayank Yadav returned after a long injury layoff.

Tilak, who has been cleared by the BCCI's Centre of Excellence (CoE) following a successful recovery from a groin injury, will feature in one of the two warm-up games before rejoining the senior national side. The left-handed batter will make a comeback to the national side after missing the recent T20 series against New Zealand, in which Shreyas Iyer was used as his replacement.

Tilak Varma & Mayank Yadav

"Tilak Varma will feature in one warm-up match before joining the senior team," the BCCI said in a post on social media while announcing the squad. India A will take on the USA at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai on Monday before facing Namibia on Friday at the CoE in Bengaluru. Ayush Badoni will captain the 15-member India A squad, which also includes Naman Dhir, Vipraj Nigam and Riyan Parag. Mayank, meanwhile, had been sidelined for over a year due to a stress fracture.

Defending champions India will begin their campaign against the USA on the opening day of the T20 World Cup on February 7.

India A squad: Ayush Badoni (c), Naman Dhir, Ashutosh Sharma, Priyansh Arya, N. Jagadeesan (wk), Tilak Varma, Riyan Parag, Manav Suthar, Ashok Sharma, Urvil Patel (wk), Gurjapneet Singh, Vipraj Nigam, Ravi Bishnoi, Khaleel Ahmed, Mayank Yadav. (PTI)

Varuni Jaiswal, Swarnendu bag TG State TT League titles

Hans News Service
Secunderabad

VARUNI Jaiswal (GSM) and Swarnendu (AVSE) emerged women and men singles titlists in the Telangana State Table Tennis League Championship at the GSM Table Tennis Academy, Secunderabad, from January 31 to February 2.

In a thrilling women's singles final, Varuni Jaiswal edged past Sri Saanvi (SPARS) 3–2 in a closely fought contest, winning 11-5, 8-11, 9-11, 11-9, 11-9. The third-place match saw Devisree (GSM) overcome G Pranitha (HVS) 3–2 (13-11, 9-11, 11-9, 9-11, 11-8). The men's singles final was equally competitive, with Swarnendu defeating Trishul Mehra (HDTT) 3–2 (11-6, 7-11, 11-8, 9-11, 11-8). Ali Mohammed (HDTT) secured third place by beating Vathsin B (GTTA) 3–1 (11-5, 11-4, 8-11, 11-9).

The three-day championship witnessed high-quality matches and strong participation, highlighting the growing standard of table tennis in Telangana.

'Pak's boycott of T20 WC against India pretty disgraceful'

NEW DELHI: Congress MP Shashi Tharoor criticised the politicisation of cricket, calling Pakistan's boycott of the T20 World Cup 2026 match against India "disgraceful," and urged all parties concerned to "contact each other on an emergency basis" regarding the imbroglio.

Shashi Tharoor said cricket is being politicised and called it disgraceful after Pakistan's decision to boycott the T20 WC match against India, while also noting that Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman should not have been denied his contract with Kolkata Knight Riders for the Indian Premier League (IPL) in the first place. He called Bangladesh's response to the Mustafizur situation an overreaction and noted that the whole T20 WC row is spiralling out of control.

"It is pretty disgraceful that sport has been politicised in this way on both sides, frankly. I don't think that Mustafizur (Bangladeshi cricketer Mustafizur Rahman) should have been denied his contract to play in Kolkata. It was most unfortunate. Intrusion of politics, I think the Bangladeshi reaction was an overreac-

tion but it is also a reflection of the same and Pakistan is trying to show its solidarity with Bangladesh. This whole thing is spiralling out of control," Tharoor told reporters.

"I think we need to really need to come to an understanding that sports, especially a sport like Cricket which means so much to all the people, should be a means of bringing us together at least on the playing field, rather than allowing this to go on like this. I honestly think this is now a wake up call for all concerned to contact each other on an emergency basis, the ICC could be the platform for it - just say, let's call off this nonsense...You can't go on like this forever," Tharoor added.

Row over SC/ST Act

Bareilly ex-magistrate threatens Delhi stir

VARANASI: Former Bareilly city magistrate Alankar Agnihotri, suspended by the Uttar Pradesh government on charges of indiscipline, has said that he would stage a protest in Delhi from February 7 if the Centre does not withdraw the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

The 2019-batch Provincial Civil Services (PCS) officer, who made headlines after resigning as the Bareilly city magistrate, made the announcement after meeting Swami Avimukteshwaranand Saraswati on Sunday at the Srividya Math located at Kedarghat here.

Agnihotri said several organisations of the upper-caste community would participate in the stir if the central government fails to withdraw the SC/ST Act by February 6.

Responding to questions on his meeting with Swami Avimukteshwaranand, who was allegedly prevented by the administration from taking a holy dip at the Triveni Sangam during Magh Mela

in Prayagraj on January 18, Agnihotri termed it a "fortunate coincidence" and not part of any political strategy.

He said Swami Avimukteshwaranand -- the Shankaracharya of Jyotirmath in Uttarakhand -- had earlier invited him to Prayagraj, but he could not meet him due to lack of time.

"With his arrival in Kashi, I got the opportunity to meet him," he said. During his interaction with the media, Agnihotri said there was widespread resentment among people over the new University Grants Commission (UGC) rules.

"The core voter base is angry with the government," he said, describing the SC/ST Act, enacted in 1989, as the "blackest law" in the country. Agnihotri alleged that 85 per cent of the population was affected by the Act and claimed that 95 per cent of cases registered under it were false, adding that upper-caste organisations across the country were backing his stand.

The Uttar Pradesh government on January 26 suspended Agnihotri, then posted as Bareilly Nagar Magistrate, on charges of indiscipline.

Earlier the same day, he had resigned from his post, expressing displeasure over government policies, particularly the new UGC regulations and issues related to Swami Avimukteshwaranand, triggering a major administrative and political controversy.

Mamata, 'SIR-affected' families meet CEC in Delhi

WB CM, TMC leaders confront Delhi cops, claim SIR-hit families from Bengal 'threatened'

NEW DELHI: West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee on Monday met Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar here along with 'SIR-affected' families and party leaders.

Last week, CEC Kumar had given time to Banerjee for a meeting on Monday. Banerjee, who reached the national capital on Sunday, was being accompanied by Trinamool MPs Abhishek Banerjee and Kalyan Banerjee, who is also an advocate.

Mamata Banerjee on Monday confronted police personnel deployed outside the Banga Bhawan in Delhi's Chanakyapuri and alleged harassment of the families affected by the SIR exercise in her state who have been brought to the national capital by the TMC.

Police said security arrangements in the area have been stepped up after the incident.

Addressing reporters, Banerjee said that the people from Bengal had

come to raise their issue with the Election Commission, but were being "threatened". She questioned the heavy police deployment outside the Bhawan's premises.

However, Banerjee added that she doesn't blame the police, but "those who are on the top", referring to Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

The chief minister had reached the national capital on Sunday, a day before her meeting with Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar on the SIR issue.

Around 50 families impacted by the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal have been brought to the national capital and are staying at various properties of the state government, including the Banga Bhawan in Chanakyapuri.

A few of these families were later taken to the meeting at the Election Commission on Monday.

China criticises Grammy Award for Dalai Lama

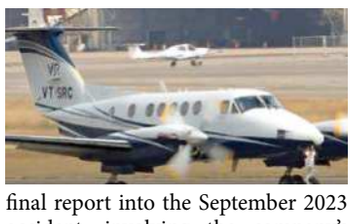
BEIJING: China on Monday deplored the Grammy Award given to the Dalai Lama, saying it "firmly opposes" the Tibetan spiritual leader using the recognition to carry out "anti-China activities".

The Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, won his first Grammy on Sunday in the category of best audio book, narration, and storytelling recording for his spoken-word album, Meditations: The Reflections of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, at the 68th annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles.

Asked for his reaction to the Dalai Lama winning the award, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian reiterated China's allegation that the 90-year-old spiritual leader is carrying out separatist activity in the name of religion. The Dalai Lama is not purely a religious person, Lin told a media briefing here. "He is a political exile committed to anti-Chinese separatist activity under the disguise of religion," he said. Beijing firmly opposes relevant sides using the award as a tool to carry out anti-China activities, he said. The Dalai Lama, who has lived in exile in Dharamsala since he left Tibet in 1959, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 for his consistent, nonviolent struggle to liberate Tibet.

Learjet plane crash probe in 'final stages', says AAIB

BARAMATI: Aviation probe agency AAIB on Monday said the investigation into the nearly three-year-old accident of a VSR Ventures-owned Learjet 45 plane at the Mumbai airport in September 2023 is in the final stages. The aeroplane crash at Baramati on January 28, in which Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and four others died, also involved a Learjet 45 plane owned by VSR Ventures. Since the Baramati plane crash, questions have been raised about the delay by the AAIB in publishing its



final report into the September 2023 accident, involving the company's plane of a similar model. Against this backdrop, AAIB said the investigation team has analysed all evidence and other documents related to that accident. "The investigation is in the final stages. The investigation team is trying their best to finalise the report on top priority," the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) said in a statement.

On September 14, 2023, the Learjet 45 aircraft (VT-DBL) met with an accident at Mumbai airport. "The aircraft had earlier taken off from Visakhapatnam airport, and while landing at Mumbai airport, the aircraft continuously drifted to the right of the Runway 27 and crash landed at the shoulder of the intersection of Taxiway W and N," the bureau said.

There were eight people onboard, including 2 crew members, in that aircraft. "The co-pilot suffered serious injury, whereas the PIC (Pilot In Command) and 6 passengers suffered minor injuries. The co-pilot could not be interviewed for a long time since he was in bad shape," the AAIB statement said.

Meanwhile, it is probing the VSR Ventures' Learjet 45 aircraft crash near the Baramati airstrip on January 28.

2024 Pune Porsche crash: Three accused get bail

MUMBAI: The Supreme Court on Monday granted bail to three accused in the 2024 Pune Porsche accident case that claimed two lives, while observing that parents are to be blamed for such incidents involving juveniles.

A bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan observed that parents are not able to control their children.

"Substance abuse is another thing but giving them (children) car keys and funds to have a gala time is unacceptable," the court observed.

On January 23, the top court sought a response from the Maharashtra government on a plea filed by accused Amar Santish Gaikwad seeking bail in the case. Gaikwad represented by advocate Sana Raees Khan was alleged to be a middleman, who gave Rs 3 lakh to the assistant of a doctor in a hospital to replace a blood sample of the juvenile accused.

On May 19, 2024, a Porsche allegedly driven by a 17-year-old boy under the influence of alcohol, fatally knocked down two IT professionals in Pune's Kalyani Nagar area.

The high court on December 16 last year rejected the bail pleas of eight accused, including Gaikwad, Sood and Mittal, in the case. (PTI)