

State registers overall 67.74 % voting in all 81 constituencies
All EVMs sealed in strong rooms under two-tier security system: CEO

PNS : RANCHI
Chief Electoral Officer, Jharkhand K Ravi Kumar today said that all EVMs have been sealed in strong rooms after scrutiny in a two-tier security system.

addressing a press conference at Nirvachan Sadan, Dhurwa on Thursday. He said that a total of 68.95 per cent voting took place in the second phase. The voting percentage will increase further after counting of postal ballots.



CEO K Ravi Kumar addresses media persons at his office in Ranchi on Thursday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

people a part of the voting. Under this, people living in forests and mountains in remote areas and leprosy patients living in isolation were motivated to vote in a planned manner. In the second phase of Jharkhand assembly elections, all 57 voters cast their votes in the special polling station set up for leprosy affected voters in Snehpur located in Hansipahari of Jamtara.

He said that counting centers have been set up in all the 24 district headquarters of the state. Counting of votes will start from 8 am on November 23. First of all, the postal ballots will be counted. Counting of EVM votes will start from 8.30 am.



Chief Minister Hemant Soren addresses party workers through video conferencing at his official residence in Ranchi on Thursday. PNS

CMPDI should accelerate R&D spending: CIL Chairman
50th CIL Foundation Day celebrated at CMPDI

PNS : RANCHI
CMPDI, a Mini-Ratna Company, celebrated the 50th Coal India Foundation Day Celebrations with full fervour on Thursday at Rabintra Bhawan, CMPDI, Ranchi.



CIL Chairman PM Prasad addresses a gathering during the CIL Foundation Day at CMPDI Ranchi on Thursday. PNS

Nagpur for Underground Project Reports; Lakshmidheep G., Manager (Env.) and Amul Patwal, Dy. Manager (Env.) of RI-III, Ranchi for ELA/EMP Reports Preparation. Team of i Susobhan Kundu, General Manager (Civil); Sujib Chatterjee, General Manager (Civil) Farah Nawaz, Manager (Civil); Navin Kumar, Deputy Manager (Civil) D Uday Kumar, Asst. Manager (Civil) of CMPDI (HQ) received awards for Infrastructural Planning.

& GR including Geo-physical & Hydrogeology. OC Division, HQ and Geomatics Division, HQ bags for outside consultancy jobs in 2023-24. Awards for 'Innovation' for 5G Technology Rollout to Dr. Tarique Sajjad, GM (ME); Sri Dhiraj Kumar, GM(Mining) /TS, CMPDI Hq; J. Tiwary, CM(E&T), TE HQ, Ranchi; and for Software Development to Dr Thinesh Kumar

INDIA winning 59 seats, battle on 22, claims JMM



JMM General Secretary Supriyo Bhattacharya during a press conference at the party office in Ranchi on Thursday. PNS

PNS : RANCHI
The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) unveiled its own version of an exit poll today, calling it the "people's view," and confidently projected a comfortable victory in the 2024 Jharkhand Assembly elections.

He specifically mentioned constituencies such as Rajmahal, Sarath, Barkatha, Barhi, Barkagaon, Simaria, Bagodar, Gandeyp, Giridih, Dumri, Gomia, Chandankiyari, Sindri, Nirsra, Ghatshila. Jugsalai, Jamshedpur, and Sarakela as strongholds where INDIA alliance candidates are expected to emerge victorious. Bhattacharya also criticized the proliferation of surveys, suggesting that some are designed to influence the betting market rather than reflect voter sentiment.

Tiger kills cow, spotted in Garhwa

NITYANAND DUBEY : GARHWA
A tiger that recently hunted a cow has crossed the Koel River into the Palamu Tiger Reserve from the forests of the Bhandaria area, sparking concern among local villagers. Reports indicate that the tiger was spotted in the Kurum forest of the Bhandaria police station late last night.

ing has intensified the atmosphere of fear. To mitigate the risk of human-tiger conflict, the forest department has been actively informing villagers in Bhandaria via loudspeakers, urging them to exercise caution and avoid venturing into the forests. This is the second consecutive year a tiger has reportedly entered the Bhandaria area, recalling incidents from March of last year when a similar event led to the deaths of three people in just two days.



phant incursions include Nageshwar Singh of Baligarh, Subhash Singh of Parro, Mahru Dealer, Ramshakal Singh from Chutia in Jonhikhand, Swati Minj of Bairia, and Sitaram Mochi from Upartola in Ramkanda. Following reports of a tiger entering the Palamu Tiger Reserve (PTR) from the Garhwa Southern Forest Area, paw marks of a male tiger have been discovered within the PTR range. Prajesh Kant Jena, the North Deputy Director of PTR, confirmed the sighting of these paw prints.

JMM is living in dream world, says Shahdev

PNS : RANCHI
BJP's state spokesperson Pratul Shahdev on Thursday said that Jharkhand Mukti Morcha can live in a dream world until the results are declared on the evening of 23 November. Pratul said that it can make any claims, boast about it. But after the election results are declared, it is preparing to blame the EVMs for its defeat.



Jharkhand have completely rejected the most corrupt Hemant government in the history of Jharkhand. This government has only done looting, extortion and corruption in the last 5 years. Corruption has become a norm and has taken institutional form. The public was completely fed up with their breaking of promises. On 23 November, they are going to show them the way out. Pratul said that they are claiming victory on paper. The ground reality is that the public has completely

CHOUHAN LEAVES FOR DELHI AFTER 90 DAYS 'POLL DUTY'

ROSHAN KUMAR : RANCHI
Union Agriculture Minister and Jharkhand Assembly Election Incharge Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Thursday invited State President Babul Marandi, Organization Minister and other BJP officials to his residence, held an informal meeting and discussed various topics in detail.



Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan offers sweets to State BJP President Babul Marandi after a meeting at BJP office in Ranchi on Thursday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

Chouhan plants 50 saplings during his stay in Jharkhand
He has planted more than 4000 saplings so far under this campaign. During his stay in Jharkhand, the Union Minister planted saplings with the people here in various cities of Jharkhand including Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Netarhat, Deoghar, Bokaro, Dhanbad. There were many such occasions when



Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan and State BJP President Babul Marandi hold a meeting with party officials at the party office in Ranchi on Thursday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

am taking very sweet memories from Jharkhand. This is a very wonderful state, there are many possibilities here. The people here have given a lot of affection and love. "Yesterday was the last day of the election campaign, today I am leaving from here as in-charge but as a Union Minister I will keep coming to Jharkhand and will keep making every possible effort for the development of Jharkhand and welfare of the people through my ministries," said Chouhan. Chouhan camped in Jharkhand for more than 90 days working as BJP's election in-charge for the assembly elections. for the two-phase polling ended on Wednesday and the results are scheduled to be declared on Saturday. Exuding confidence on BJP winning the election, Chouhan said, "The BJP-led NDA will form a majority govt in the state after the results are declared. This is based on the feedback that I received from the grassroots-level workers. I'm leaving Jharkhand with sweet memories. The state and its people are wonderful. Everyone has shown great affection towards me." Earlier in the day, he expressed his gratitude to the party members at the BJP office and spent time with his staff at the temporary residence over breakfast. "Party workers are our real strength. They had put in a lot of hard work for the past few months," he added.

50 killed, 20 injured in Pak's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ambush

At least 50 people were killed and 20 others injured when several vehicles carrying passengers were targeted by militants in northwest Pakistan on Thursday, officials said.

Pak court grants 5-day physical remand of Imran Khan

An anti-terrorism court in Pakistan on Thursday granted a five-day physical remand of former prime minister Imran Khan, who was arrested formally by police hours after his bail in a corruption case was accepted.

Pak court grants 5-day physical remand of Imran Khan

A team has been tasked to probe the charges. The charges include violations of the Anti-Terrorism Act, defying the government ban on public gatherings, obstructing police duty, damaging police vehicles and endangering public safety.

Gen Munir urges people to prioritise nation over 'personal interests'

Karachi (PTI): Pakistan's Army Chief General Asim Munir has said that "nothing, including politics," was above the country and urged people to prioritise the nation over "personal interests."

Gen Munir urges people to prioritise nation over 'personal interests'

Earlier meeting with the business leaders in Karachi, he said everyone needed to understand the importance of putting the country above everything else.

Sri Lanka Prez backs IMF package despite pre-poll rhetoric

Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake Thursday backed an International Monetary Fund bailout package despite pre-presidential election rhetoric to renegotiate with the global lender to water down tough conditions laid down for the recovery.

N Korea, Russia agree to expand eco cooperation

North Korea and Russia reached a new agreement for expanding economic cooperation following high-level talks in Pyongyang this week, the North's state media said Thursday, as they continue to align in the face of their confrontations with Washington.

Jong Un and his top economic official, Premier Kim Tok Hun, before returning home on Wednesday, KCNA said.

During Kozlov's visit, Russian President Vladimir Putin's gifted Pyongyang's Central Zoo with more than 70 animals, including lions, bears and several species of birds, according to Tass, in another display of the countries' growing ties.

break out of international isolation and strengthen his footing, actively supporting Putin's war on Ukraine while portraying the North as a player in a united front against Washington.

Kim Jong Un in recent months has prioritized relations with Moscow as he attempts to

acknowledge that he has been providing military equipment and troops to Russia to support its fighting against Ukraine.

South Korea's National Intelligence Service told lawmakers in a closed-door briefing on Wednesday that an estimated 11,000 North Korean soldiers in late October were moved to Russia's Kursk region, where Ukrainian troops seized parts of its territory this year, following their training in Russia's northeast.

THE PIONEER'S CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Kulwant Singh Bhogal S/O Kirpal Singh, R/o-RZ-84, Radha Swamy Dairy, Indra Park, Uttam Nagar, West Delhi, Delhi-110059, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Kulwant Singh.

LOST & FOUND

Lost: Perpetual Lease Deed & other documents for Property No. 385, Nimri Colony, Ashok Vihar Phase 4, Delhi. NCR filed, LR No: 2316794/2024. Finder contact Sanjeev Kumar: 9999992570

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the Public at large that LATE SARABJI KAUR BALI W/o. D.S. BALI (DAVIDER SINGH BALI) is the owner of 100% share of Flat No. 206/207...

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NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

The Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha, Assam, invites bids from registered appropriate class of contractor for building works in different schools as per the detailed notice inviting tender which can be downloaded from the website https://www.assamtenders.gov.in.



A YEAR OF POLITICAL RESURGENCE



In 2024, Donald Trump made a surprising return to the White House, defying expectations after his 2020 loss. His victory, alongside Modi's re-election, marked a pivotal moment in global politics, says **KUMAR CHELLAPPAN**

The year 2024 will be remembered by political historians for two major developments: the re-election of Narendra Modi as Prime Minister of India for a third term and that of Donald Trump as President of the United States. Modi's victory was as expected, but Trump's victory, having lost his re-election bid in 2020, was not so certain. The left-leaning media had written off Trump after his 2020 defeat, and it is rare for a defeated president to stage a comeback. However, Trump, a master at making the impossible possible, won a landslide in the 2024 election, defeating the entire left-liberal establishment. He proved that hard work is often the key to success. You may either love or loathe Trump, depending on your political views, but the truth is, he can never be ignored. He first became President in 2016 when the US economy was struggling, and the country's global image was tarnished. The infrastructure was in decline, and the US had become an industrial

wasteland. "My mission is to make America great again. We have to retrieve the lost ground and make the people happy and content," Trump declared during his campaign speeches. Despite relentless attacks from Hillary Clinton, Trump held firm and focused on his mission. His dedication earned him significant support from voters. When he was declared the winner by a substantial margin, Washington and other major cities saw rioting by anti-Trump forces. The media quickly pointed the finger at Trump's followers for the unrest. The period between 2016 and 2020 saw the US recover from economic stagnation and terrorism-related challenges. For Trump, America remained his top priority, and he aimed to keep the US out of foreign conflicts. His main goal was to ensure no more coffins with US soldiers' remains were returned from Asia and Africa. Under Trump, illegal immigration from Mexico and Latin America came to a halt, as he warned against job theft by outsiders. Drug trafficking from

Colombia and Mexico, which had been a major issue, was also reduced, strengthening the US social security system. Like a soldier guarding his nation's borders, Trump, at the helm of a major business empire, defended the social fabric of America. However, many in the US and abroad resented Trump's patriotism and worked to oust him from the White House. It seemed a foregone conclusion that Trump would easily win re-election in 2020. However, overconfidence led to his defeat by a narrow margin. Bob Woodward, a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner, had predicted in his book *Rage* (2020) that Trump was likely to lose. Despite strong economic performance, record-low unemployment, and the US staying out of international conflicts, Trump lost due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Woodward claimed that Trump was warned about the virus as early as January 2020, but he ignored the threat and paid the price for his inaction. Other factors also played a role. The 2020 election was marred by allegations



ABOUT THE BOOK
Book: WAR
by Bob Woodward
Publisher: Simon & Schuster
Price: ₹999

of fraud, with many believing it was manipulated by Trump's rivals and hostile forces. Shiv Ayyadurai, an Indian-origin computer scientist credited with inventing email, raised concerns about the election's integrity. According to Ayyadurai, the mail-in ballots used in Arizona had mismatched signatures, which were overlooked by election officials. Despite Ayyadurai's efforts to prove these discrepancies, little attention was given to the alleged fraud. In his book *War*, Woodward examines Joe Biden's presidency and highlights three major failures during his four-year tenure. Biden's inability to deal with Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is central to the critique. Woodward argues that Biden's handling of the Ukraine crisis, in particular, was ineffective, and his approach to the Jewish state was also disappointing. The brutal 2023 Hamas attack on Israel, which resulted in widespread death and destruction, will remain a painful memory for humanity. Protests in India, where groups like

Hamas and Hezbollah have influence, added to the turmoil. Woodward also reveals that US intelligence agencies had warned Biden in October 2021 about Putin's plans to attack Ukraine. Yet, Biden seemed reluctant to take decisive action. The cause for his hesitation may lie in his son Hunter Biden's involvement with Burisma, a major Ukrainian energy company, potentially jeopardising his ability to challenge Russia. As I write this review, TV channels are reporting that President-elect Trump has issued a stern warning for all illegal immigrants to leave the US within two months. This is one of the promises he made during his campaign, and he seems determined to see it through. The Democrats and liberals have already expressed their opposition to this move. The next four years will be filled with action, and it will be fascinating to see how Trump's administration navigates issues like Iran, Hamas, West Asia, Russia, and Ukraine. Woodward will no doubt continue to provide in-depth coverage of these developments.

NEW RELEASE

Discover India Beyond the Metros

The High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam, H.E. Dato Paduka HJ Alaihuddin Mohd Taha, recently launched "India Beyond Metros: Dekho Apna Bharat", a travelogue by Varun Soni. The book highlights India's lesser-known Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, offering readers a fresh perspective on the country's hidden gems beyond the metropolitan hubs, Writes SAKSHI PRIYA

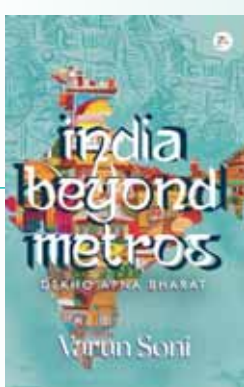
"India Beyond Metros: Dekho Apna Bharat", authored by Varun Soni, is a captivating travelogue that takes readers on a journey through the lesser-known cities of India. In this, his fifth book, Soni explores around 50 Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities across the country, offering an in-depth look at small-town India and the vibrant culture that often goes unnoticed by mainstream tourism.

Unlike typical travel guides that focus on major metropolitan destinations such as Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru, Soni's book highlights cities such as Jabalpur, Gorakhpur, Hubballi, Kollam, Rajkot, and others. These places, though not typically featured in popular travel literature, offer a wealth of untapped history, culture, and natural beauty. Each chapter of the book is dedicated to one city, providing practical insights on what to see, where to stay, how to get there, and even what to shop for.

The book fills a significant gap in Indian travel literature by encouraging people to venture beyond the typical tourist hotspots and explore the rich diversity of India's smaller towns and rural areas. It showcases the hidden gems of the Indian hinterland, offering readers a chance to experience



the authentic essence of Bharat (India). At the launch event, the High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam, H.E. Dato Paduka HJ Alaihuddin Mohd Taha, expressed his admiration for the book. At the book launch, He expressed his excitement, stating, "I am very glad to be here to launch a book on a topic that is a passion with me. After travelling across various parts of India, I can vouch that the hinterland has much more to offer than just the metropolitan areas. This book will serve as a helpful guide for those keen to explore these lesser-known regions." As an avid traveller, he shared his own experiences of exploring various regions of India, including Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Nagaland. He



ABOUT THE BOOK
Book: India beyond metros
by Varun Soni
Publisher: ZORBA BOOKS
Price: ₹299
Pages: 172

highlighted that these lesser-explored areas of India offer a different, yet equally rich, experience compared to the well-known metropolitan cities. Author Varun Soni added, "It is time to look inward, into Bharat. This book highlights the hidden treasures in our smaller cities and towns, showcasing not only historical monuments but also the natural beauty that often goes unnoticed in mainstream travel guides." Soni, in his address, discussed the book's purpose of shedding light on the lesser-visited cities and towns of India. He spoke about the country's ancient civilisation, its countless monuments and temples, and the natural beauty found in these regions. Soni's aim with "India Beyond Metros: Dekho Apna Bharat" is to inspire readers to look inward and discover the treasures hidden in the smaller cities and villages that often go unnoticed. Soni's literary career spans more than 15 years, with works that include books on celebrity homes, luxury resorts, and fiction. With this latest offering, he continues his mission to share the lesser-known aspects of India, bringing attention to the often-overlooked parts of the country that are full of untold stories and cultural richness.

A Spellbinding Adventure

Alexander Armstrong's 'Evenfall: The Golden Linnet', is a captivating fantasy adventure that whisks readers away to a world of magic and mystery. With stunning world-building, unforgettable characters, and a thrilling plot, Armstrong's novel is a must-read for fans of fantasy and storytelling alike, says ABHI SINGHAL

In *Evenfall: The Golden Linnet*, Alexander Armstrong crafts a mesmerising portal into a world of magic and the enduring power of storytelling. A tale of courage, friendship, and family in his debut novel is destined to become a modern fantasy classic which weaves ancient lore with the challenges of life.

The story centres on 13-year-old Sam, a relatable and sympathetic protagonist of the novel whose life has been marked by tragedy. Caring for his grieving, unwell father after his mother's untimely death, Sam grapples with the complexities of loss, love, and responsibility. His life takes a thrilling and dangerous turn when he discovers his hidden heritage as part of The Order of the Evening, a secret society devoted to protecting the world through storytelling. Armstrong's plot is rich, combining elements of historical mystery with the fantastical quest for magical artefacts that makes it happen and sparks out curiosity. Sam's mission to uncover the truth about his parents and his destiny introduces readers to a lush, danger-laden world where trust is scarce, alliances are fragile, and malevolent forces threaten humanity. The inclusion of supporting characters like Sam's loyal friend Ish and the enigmatic Goz brings depth and warmth to the narrative. Their camaraderie highlights the strength of friendship amid the gravest of challenges, providing



ABOUT THE BOOK
Book: Evenfall: The Golden Linnet
by Alexander Armstrong
Publisher: Farshore
Price: ₹499
Pages: 352

balance to the story's darker themes. The vivid setting of Durham, steeped in British folklore and cultural heritage, serves in perfect form for this battle between good and evil. Armstrong's talent for description shines as he immerses readers in both the modern cityscape and the mystical locations that form the heart of the Order's secrets. As a well-known TV and radio personality, Alexander Armstrong has a knack for storytelling that

translates seamlessly into his writing. Widely recognised as a comedian, quiz show host, and singer, Armstrong's foray into children's literature reveals another layer of his creative versatility. With a nod to the timeless appeal of authors like Philip Pullman and J.K. Rowling, Armstrong builds a world that feels both familiar and extraordinary. At nearly 400 pages, the novel is a longer read, yet its pacing ensures readers remain hooked. Suspense builds steadily as Sam uncovers his latent powers, battles sinister forces, and learns that the fate of the world may rest in his hands. Tom Roberts' striking black-and-white illustrations further elevate the reading experience, giving visual depth to Armstrong's vivid prose. What sets *Evenfall: The Golden Linnet* apart is its heart. Beneath the magic and danger lies a story about grief, hope, and the lengths we go to for those we love. The imperfections in Sam's relationships – with his friends, his father, and even himself – are portrayed with sensitivity, making his journey feel deeply authentic. This debut novel, brimming with excitement and emotion, is an absolute treat for readers aged 10 and up. Whether you're a lifelong fantasy enthusiast or new to the genre, *Evenfall: The Golden Linnet* promises a compelling, immersive adventure – and with its final pages hinting at more to come, Alexander Armstrong's literary journey is one to watch.

RANCHI | FRIDAY | NOVEMBER 22, 2024

It's going to get more attritional: Pat Cummins

PTI | PERTH

Australian captain Pat Cummins expects the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against arch-foes India to be more "attritional" as the two heavyweights of world cricket spar over five Test matches instead of the traditional four games.

And given the enormity of the series, Cummins believes players would not have the time to be distracted by the IPL auction that would take place in Jeddah on Sunday, the third day of the match. The blockbuster series will be a survival of the fittest as Australia look to avenge successive losses on home soil when they go head-to-head from Friday.

"The Border-Gavaskar Trophy has always been very tight every series, five Test-match series gets really attritional, it's a big one really," Cummins said at the pre-match press conference here on Thursday.

Australia will be without their assistant coach Daniel Vettori, who was granted permission to leave the Perth Test and be at the two-day auction with his IPL franchise SunRisers Hyderabad.

"Yeah, I think he is there in the auction. I don't think so (it will be a distraction). Dan has



flown over there, but he has been here for the whole prep. Done all the meetings, done all the chats, watching it. We came to know that anyway," Cummins said.

"So, for the players, I don't think so. Most of these guys have been there in the auctions before. They know they can't really do anything. You are a sitting duck and seeing whether you get selected or not. It doesn't. Doesn't make a difference to how we go about the first two days. It is not a distraction as far as I can see it," he added.

The Australia captain admitted there will be pressure on the home team, especially after it lost the last four Test series against India, including the two humiliating reverses on own soil.

"There will always be pressure when you are playing at home. India are a very talented side and it will be a good challenge. But we are not looking too far ahead," Cummins said.

legendary opener who retired from international cricket earlier this year. "He should play his natural game. He shouldn't try to imitate David Warner. That's not his game. As long as he makes the bowlers bowl again and again, that's his game," Cummins said of the man who is going to be handed his Test debut at Optus Stadium.

Asked about India's talented all-rounder Nitish Reddy, Cummins said they shared the dressing room for IPL franchise SunRisers Hyderabad and praised the 21-year-old. "He is and impressive youngster. Didn't bowl much for SRH. He can swing the ball and is a really talented kid."



We are not carrying baggage from New Zealand series, says Jasprit Bumrah

PTI | PERTH

India's stand-in skipper Jasprit Bumrah on Thursday insisted that his team is not carrying any baggage from the unprecedented 0-3 defeat at home against New Zealand as it embarks on a challenging Test series against fierce rivals Australia.

The five-match Test series starts here on Friday. "When you win you start from zero but when you lose, then also you also start from zero. We are not carrying any baggage from India. Yes, we have our learnings from New Zealand series but those were different conditions and our results here have been different," said Bumrah, who is leading in the opening Test in the absence of Rohit Sharma, who is on paternity leave.

Pujara backs KL Rahul at No. 3, believes Jaiswal can do a Warner



PTI | PERTH

Cheteshwar Pujara, who knows a thing or two about grinding the Australian attack in their den, on Thursday backed KL Rahul to bat at the vital number three slot in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, and said the swashbuckling Yashasvi Jaiswal is capable of doing what David Warner did in his prime.



and play according to the situation. Be in the present moment," he said. "Kohli needs a start Virat Kohli may be going through a lean patch but Pujara believes his past success in Australia will help him to turn things around.

"There is a lot of expectation of him. The number of matches he's playing and the athlete Virat is, he doesn't get enough breaks in between. That is why sometimes, when you're not getting enough breaks, your body and confidence go down a bit. That's normal. He has got some break. He's at a place where he likes to compete. If someone is having a go at him, he would like to give it back to the bowlers -- that's how he started his journey.

Spanish star Juan Mata joins ownership group of MLS expansion franchise San Diego FC

AP | SAN DIEGO

Spanish star and World Cup Champion Juan Mata has joined the expansion San Diego FC's ownership group, making him the first active international soccer player to hold an ownership stake in Major League Soccer.



AP | SAN DIEGO

Academy "aligns perfectly with my own values. I look forward to contributing my experience and passion for the game and working alongside everyone here to build a club that inspires both on and off the pitch." He has been with the Western Sydney Wanderers of the Australian A-League since September.

Mata has been a big name in international soccer for years. He won club honors in England, Spain, Turkey and Japan, and was a key player in the golden era of the Spanish men's national team which won the 2010 World Cup and the 2012 UEFA European Championship. A product of Real Madrid's youth academy, Mata began his professional

career with Real Madrid Castilla before transferring to Valencia CF in 2007, where he won the Copa del Rey the following year. Mata signed with Chelsea FC in 2011, where he was pivotal in helping the London club capture the UEFA Champions League, FA Cup, and UEFA Europa League titles, earning Chelsea's Player of the Year honors twice in that span.

Indian women's hockey team starts 2028 Los Angeles Olympics' qualification journey

PTI | RAJGIR (BIHAR)

A new-look and much-fitter Indian women's hockey team started its 2028 Los Angeles Olympics' qualification journey in the most perfect manner, producing a scintillating, unbeaten performance during its title-defending Asian Champions Trophy campaign here.

And Harendra couldn't have asked for more from his wards. "I truly believe this victory will inspire more young girls to take up hockey and further elevate the sport in India. We are thrilled to be able to bring this win to our fans and our nation," said captain Salima Tete after the brilliant campaign.



"Our ultimate aim is to bring more laurels to India and make the country proud," she added. The Indians were impressive in most departments of the game and remained unbeaten in seven

line was also one of the hallmarks of India's performance as they conceded just two goals in seven games, while scoring as many as 29 themselves. Out of these 29 goals, 15 came from field efforts -- a heartening statistic --, 12 from penalty corners and two from penalty strokes.

to the tournament and it was clearly visible on the turf as the side played fast-paced, one-touch hockey throughout the tournament to trouble opponents, including reigning Olympic silver-medallists China whom they defeated 1-0 in the final to retain the title.

hardly called into action in the tournament. But going forward, their is a vital area of concern for Harendra -- conversion rate from penalty corners.