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PAPER WITH PASSION

Kudos to his mettle

Djokovic's 23rd Grand Slam victory is a testament to his exceptional talent and mental fortitude

In an extraordinary display of talent, perseverance, and unwavering determination, Novak Djokovic has reached a remarkable milestone in his tennis career, securing his 23rd Grand Slam title with a magnificent victory at the French Open. This exceptional achievement not only solidifies Djokovic's status as one of the greatest players in the history of the sport but also places him ahead of his formidable rival Rafael Nadal in terms of Grand Slam titles won. The French Open final witnessed Djokovic's sheer brilliance on the court as he overcame all challenges with his exceptional skills, mental fortitude, and unwavering focus. His victory against a highly formidable opponent showcased his unparalleled ability to thrive under immense pressure. Djokovic's ability to adapt to different surfaces and excel in all conditions has been a hallmark of his illustrious career, and it was on full display during this historic moment. By securing his 23rd Grand Slam title, Djokovic surpasses the remarkable record set by Rafael Nadal, an achievement that solidifies his place among the tennis greats. It is a testament to his incredible work ethic, dedication, and talent that he has been able to consistently perform at the highest level and break records that were once considered untouchable. Djokovic's journey to this record-breaking moment has been nothing short of extraordinary. Throughout his career, he has faced numerous challenges, setbacks, and intense competition from his peers, but his resilience and mental strength have always been his greatest assets. His ability to bounce back from defeats and learn from his mistakes has propelled him to the pinnacle of the sport.



What sets Djokovic apart from his contemporaries is not just his ability to win Grand Slam titles but also his consistency across all major tournaments. His unwavering focus and hunger for success have propelled him to an astounding total of 23 titles, with victories across the Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon, and the US Open. This remarkable feat underscores his versatility and adaptability, as he has conquered every Grand Slam tournament. Djokovic's dominance over the past few years has been truly remarkable. His relentless pursuit of excellence has seen him achieve unprecedented success, and his ability to maintain his form and peak physical condition year after year is a testament to his dedication to the sport. As Djokovic continues to etch his name in the annals of tennis history, his achievements serve as a reminder of the incredible talent, hard work, and sacrifice required to reach the pinnacle of any sport. Novak Djokovic's record-breaking 23rd Grand Slam title victory will be remembered for generations to come. It is a testament to his exceptional talent, mental fortitude, and sheer willpower. As he continues to push the boundaries of what is possible on the tennis court, Djokovic serves as an inspiration to all athletes, reminding them that with unwavering dedication and a burning desire to succeed, the impossible can be achieved.

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PICTALK



Visitors at the India Gate lawns alongside Kartavya Path on a hot summer day, in New Delhi

Engage children in environmental issues

Schools should incorporate environmental education into their curricula, fostering a sense of environmental stewardship from an early age



SONALI KHAN

"How long does it take for a plastic bottle to decompose?" asked the teacher to a class full of children and parents at a monthly parent-teacher meeting. The answer: 500-700 years left everyone startled and gave each other a look of shock. The next question was, "How much plastic waste is generated in Delhi alone?" The answer: According to an assessment carried out by the Delhi government's environment department in 2020, Delhi generates 1,060 tonnes of plastic waste every day, explained the teacher. A group of parents and children stood up to commit to using cloth bags and reusable water bottles, along with motivating their peers to adopt sustainable practices as small as these.

Children are the most vulnerable to the effects of air pollution and environmental changes. They are also the ones who will inherit the planet, so we must listen to their voices and empower them to be agents of change. India's environmental challenges are extensive, encompassing air and water pollution, scarcity of food and water, inadequate waste management, and biodiversity loss.

One promising avenue lies in empowering children, who possess a unique perspective and untapped potential to contribute to environmental solutions. As future custodians of the planet, they will bear the burden of environmental degradation. By involving children as stakeholders in decision-making processes and policy discussions, their creativity, innovative thinking, and passion can be harnessed to shape a sustainable future. However, empowering children goes beyond tokenistic gestures; it requires meaningful participation, genuine inclusion of their perspectives, and the protection of their rights. Adoption of innovative approaches is needed to engage children in the journey to build their stewardship for the planet and do what is best for themselves, their homes, and the community around them.

Through initiatives like 'Mera Planet Mera Ghar', children have actively engaged with environ-



mental concerns to adopt sustainable practices and influence the community and policymakers, thus exemplifying a paradigm shift in recognizing children's agency in environmental stewardship. This initiative is making significant strides in empowering children and amplifying their voices on environmental concerns in their communities. Through surveys, interactive activities, science-based experiments, workshops, and community events, the initiative provides children with a platform to build environmental stewardship, express their views, and develop a deep understanding of environmental challenges and their implications. However, genuine empowerment requires a comprehensive approach that encompasses educational reforms, policy changes, and collaboration among media, civil society organizations, the government, and, most importantly, the citizens of India. Along with this, there is an acute need to engage children where they are and empower them to take immediate steps so that they can make sense of their environment and adopt sustainable behaviour as a life-long practice. By incorporating



BY INCORPORATING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION INTO CURRICULA AND PRIORITISING CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES, INDIA CAN BUILD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

environmental education into curricula, prioritizing children's participation in decision-making processes, and creating platforms that amplify their voices, India can unlock the full potential of empowering children and building a sustainable future. To fully realize the potential of empowering children as environmental stakeholders, broader systemic changes are necessary. Educational institutions should incorporate environmental education into their curricula, fostering a sense of environmental stewardship from an early age to enable the adoption of behaviours for sustainable practices.

Campaigns like 'Mera Planet, Mera Ghar' have shown tremendous potential in engaging children in environmental issues and promoting sustainable practices. Through science-based experiments, interactive workshops, and multimedia content, the campaign educates children about the environment and empowers them to become agents of change.

The involvement of local leaders, parents, and NGO partners ensures that children's voices are heard, and their demands are taken seri-

ously. The campaign's success in reaching millions of people through social media platforms and generating significant engagement highlights the importance of collaborative efforts between various stakeholders. While empowering children and incorporating environmental education into the curriculum are important steps, it is crucial to acknowledge the limitations and potential drawbacks of such approaches.

Decision-making processes should balance children's involvement with their age-appropriate understanding of complex environmental issues. Short-term campaigns may fail to bring about lasting behavioural change or significant policy shifts. Environmental challenges require sustained and systemic changes that go beyond awareness-raising and educational initiatives. Therefore, it is crucial to complement these efforts with comprehensive policy reforms, investment in infrastructure, and stronger regulations to address the root causes of environmental problems.

(The writer is Managing Trustee, of Sesame Workshop India Trust. Views expressed are the personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FIGHT PLASTIC POLLUTION

Sir — The human race is sadly disinterested in fighting plastic pollution. The first man-made plastic was created in 1862. It has taken 150 years to wake up to its damage and maybe another 50 to stop its use. We explore and create new things but are not present enough about their outcomes and far less earnest to rectify in time. We split the atom only to terrorise each other with a deadly weapon. But man's genius would continue to drive his curiosity and innovation. We already are into human genetic intervention and modification. On a lesser time scale than the likes of plastics, we may meet bigger consequences with little idea as to where this exciting field takes us from which we may find it difficult to retrace or undo. Man though gifted with brilliance, is as cursed with lack of foresight. His eagerness to pander to his creativity overrides his sense of equilibrium. Govts have passed laws on plastics ban, but lack the willpower to implement them as their campaign to educate the public lacks impetus and the evangelical zeal required for a universal cause. We then leave it to future generations to suffer the consequences and to seek, remedies rendered harder over time, to devise and implement.

R. Narayanan | Mumbai

WOMEN WIN THE JUNIOR ASIA CUP

Sir — Once again the women folk have made the country proud by winning the Maiden Women's Junior Asia Cup held in Japan, Kakamigahara. They defeated South Korea 2-1 in a nail-biting finish. This maiden triumph has once again shifted the limelight to women's hockey team. It is interesting to note that they have already secured a spot in the F.I.H women's Junior World Cup 2023 in Chile by reaching the final here.

While Annu and Neelan stole the limelight by scoring one goal each, Indian captain Preeti captured the centre stage by winning the player of the match. In an International tournament dominated by Asian stalwarts like Japan and China, a

Slash rates of petroleum products



India imports about 85 per cent crude to meet its requirements and spends huge foreign exchange. Recently, India has through its stepped-up imports of Russian crude-it bought a third of its from the sanctions-hit country in March-substantially buffered itself from any

appreciable adverse impact. India has sharply increased its purchase of crude from Russia the price India pays for the imported barrel of oil has been steadily declining. Still, the softening in crude purchase prices has not yet percolated to the Indian consumer.

It is not only that we have imported Russian crude at cheaper rates, but the prices of petrol and diesel in the international market are also down to about \$75 against \$116 per barrel in May 2022. But the pump prices of petrol and diesel have remained unchanged since. May 22, 2022. The Government must decide on the basis to reduce petroleum prices in the country by reducing the central government taxes on petroleum products.

S.K. Khosla | Chandigarh

podium finish is a great achievement. This win is likely to boost their confidence in the upcoming challenges at the Junior World Cup later in the year.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

AUSSIES WIN THE TEST CHAMPIONSHIP

Sir — Kudos to Australia for beating India handsomely (209 run thrashing) to win their maiden World Test Championship and the first team to win the full set of a total 9 number of ICC trophies. The Aussies played well and deserve a part for playing brilliantly the last 5 days. India showed up for two sessions on days 3 and 4 to make it a bit of a contest. Even India started the day needing 280 runs with 7 wickets in hand, but then they proceeded to collapse in just 20.3 overs on a pitch that was still good for batting. Apart from some fielding lapses, the Aussies were the better side.

India has a serious mental problem with ICC knockouts and finals no matter what the format. I think this loss for India will hurt more than the last loss to New Zealand. What happened for India was along expected lines. An ill-prepared team, with four players (Rohit, Pujara,

Bharat and Umesh Yadav) whose best Test days were long over, a clueless and docile captain, and listless fielding. What was even more shameful was the meek surrender, without even a semblance of a fight for pride. Here at the Oval, the pitch was good, there were no atmospheric conditions and batting were hot and perfectly excellent throughout. Yet Indian "God" batsmen failed to even pass 250 in the second innings. I think the coach and the other support staff have a lot to answer for. The grass and cloud cover sets the cat among the pigeons of the Indian team think tank and lo and behold - we bowl first, conceding 469 runs which are near - then our aggregate score of both innings. There is so much media hype and slick event marketing about our cricket players who are idolised with sky-high expectations but the fact is that these are only gullible illusions about reality! But it's possible, with proper team selection, practice and when our top order has stuck in with improving bowling.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

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Millennials and their aspirational homes

The real estate market in India is experiencing a significant shift due to the influence of the millennial generation



SHRENIK SIROYA

India's millennial generation, which constitutes 34% of the country's population, is redefining the real estate market. They are a moneyed lot with greater access to education and job opportunities than the previous generation and are more aspirational. Despite a culture of saving for the future, the millennial generation is investing heavily in real estate, with a recent survey indicating that nearly 75% of them plan to invest in real estate over the next three years.

One of the primary reasons for this trend is the Indian culture of valuing land ownership and viewing it as a matter of pride and an extension of one's personality. Millennials view owning a physical asset like land as a source of long-term security and a surety in times of unexpected calamities. Moreover, they spend large sums on education and marriages, which makes a physical asset like a piece of land a practical investment, considering that its value only appreciates with time. However, millennials' approach to land ownership and the concept of an 'ideal' home is vastly different



from that of their parents. The aesthetics of living space are of paramount importance to them. They are open to experimentation and receptive to fads and trends, with a flexible budget to explore and adhere to values. They prioritize themes, a wide choice of raw materials, and an array of colour palettes, unlimited decor and furnishing options, which give them a wide range of choices.

The concept of a home is far more inclusive than earlier, and outer open space is as important as inner space. To ensure access to natural sunlight, fresh air, and maximum greenery, balconies, patios, and terraces are planned right at the design stage. A garden, a home theatre, a workout space, a study space, a reading space, a swimming pool, play area are just a few options that redefine the functional-

ity of a home. Millennials prefer apartment blocks with amenities within the complex itself, such as a gym, basketball/badminton courts, grocery and vegetable stores, mini theatres, medical stores, and even a clinic, as convenience is a mantra they swear by. They also expect the community living space to be pet-friendly.

Easy access to essentials, fashion, entertainment, and people is the primary driver for millennials. They are attracted to properties in good neighborhoods featuring open green areas and facilities such as hospitals, educational institutes, banks, shopping complexes, etc. within easy access. The residential and spending habits have changed the face of cities.

The millennial preference covers the entire spectrum. While some go for quirky spaces, others go for contemporary elegance; some fancy smart homes, while eco-friendliness is the crux for others; apartment complexes for maximum security and community interaction is a choice, unbridled freedom, and complete privacy is also

a choice, not to forget the hybrid gated communities. They are also investing in farmlands, building farmhouses, and vacation homes. These changing preferences are making the real estate market a great opportunity for players in the space.

The new generation opts for spacious, bigger homes as they are spending more time in their homes with their loved ones. Also, with 'work-from-home' becoming the new norm, they like to have a separate workspace. While millennials also crave experiences like travelling and pursuing hobbies, let's not forget that home itself has transformed into an experience even as we see a resurgence of family values.

The real estate market in India is experiencing a significant shift due to the influence of the millennial generation. This generation is actively investing in real estate, but their perspectives on land ownership and the definition of an 'ideal' home are considerably different from those of previous generations.

(The author is CEO and Founder of Legend Siroya Realtors)



FIRST COLUMN

KEEP YOUR ACCOUNT OF GIVE AND TAKE CLEAR

Giving is a fabulous trait that brings blessings and abundance



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

While money can't buy happiness, it certainly lets you choose your form of misery, said Groucho Marx-the great comedian of America. We all love money ...don't we? It's a fact that money makes the world go round because it can make the impossible possible and the unimaginable real. Hence, it won't be an exaggeration to say that money can do almost everything. But, as mentioned above, does money buy happiness? If this answer were Yes, in that case, all the millionaires would be immensely happy and the poor, who are the majority in the world, would be unhappy. Hence, we need to understand that the association of money with happiness depends not on how much we have, but on how we use it and how we relate to our resources.

Of course, a person of modest means will have many concerns, like paying bills and children's schooling, but then wealthy people often need to protect themselves behind walls and drive in armoured cars. So, in that sense, a nomad who lives in a tent in the desert can be very happy. Right? In Hindi, money means Dhan which is derived from the verb 'Dena', meaning to give. All of us just love to take everything and anything that comes our way, isn't it true? but when it comes to giving something, our face becomes grim and our heart sinks, why is it so? If we look at what is happening around us, we would realize that we have become a society of takers, and surprisingly when it comes to taking, none of us counts the cost, but when it comes to giving every tiny item is checked and calculated. In India, there has been a culture of donating or sharing one's wealth with others for many years. The whole idea



behind this has been that anything that one has in excess, it should be given to those who need it and in turn earn blessings and good wishes. Hence, we must realise the fact that money is merely a tool that has to be used wisely and without greed, attachment or selfishness to create happiness for all.

An enlightened person would always use the money for the maximum good of the maximum number of people, whereas for a spiritually empowered soul, money becomes a tool to create good karma and a good destiny for the self and others. So, the moral of the story is that money has never made man permanently happy, nor will it. As takers, we try our best to gain as much as we can from others without providing anything back or providing just a little bit back in return. Those who are takers are not known as benevolent or generous people and will tend to have a mindset of 'what's in it for me?'. Such people are inclined to look for what they can gain from others, sometimes without considering the option of giving something to themselves. On the other hand, givers are those who are selfless and tend to give all they have or a lot of what they have and usually are not willing to take anything back.

Giving is a fabulous trait that brings blessings and abundance, as long as it is coming from a complete place and is used in the right dose. The universe responds very well to giving when it comes from a "pure" place and a true willingness to give. Unfortunately, the irony of today's time is that we have trained our current generation just to take... take and take without giving their fair share. We have set up systems that encourage the attitude of giving a little and getting a great deal in return. However, in this whole act of smartness, we tend to forget that nothing in this world comes without paying a price, if not now then for sure it will be later. There is nothing for free, that is the Universal Law. If this simple law and all its deep implications could be understood and accepted, then our dealings with others would be based upon honesty. Those who learn to keep their account of give and take in balance can avoid bankruptcy.

(Writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist for publications across India, Nepal & UK)

De-dollarisation is fast becoming a reality



UTTAM CHAKRABORTY

The current escalation of hostilities between Russia and Ukraine has given a boost to the de-dollarisation movement

In a startling mode, the BRICS group of countries - Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa - is developing a new currency to compete with the US dollar. Moscow and Beijing are aggressively leading the charge toward de-dollarization. It is argued with this major development, the value of the dollar is going to lose its sheen very soon. Increased investment in BRICS countries would lead to an increase in spending and economic development. Consequently, it is predicted that if the BRICS nations follow forward with their plan and create a new currency, it might help stabilise their economies.

With no wonder, De-dollarization is the process of making the dollar less indispensable in international trade. Trading oil and/or other commodities, purchasing US dollars for the forex reserves, entering into bilateral trade agreements, and purchasing dollar-denominated assets are all examples of dollarization. Due to the dollar's extensive use, the United States enjoys disproportionate sway over other economies. The United States has traditionally employed the use of sanctions as a means to accomplish its foreign policy objectives. The goal of de-dollarization is to protect national central banks from geopolitical dangers associated with the United States Dollar's position as the world's reserve currency. The term "de-dollarization" has gained popularity in recent years as countries work to lessen their reliance on the US dollar and assert greater control over their economies. The economic and geopolitical difficulties experienced by many nations as a result of US sanctions or influence have been a driving force behind this pattern.

The reasons behind the dawn of De-dollarization are many. However, the current escalation of hostilities between Russia and Ukraine has given a boost to the De-dollarization movement. Russia's \$300 billion in foreign currency reserves have been frozen and Russian banks have been barred from the Swift international payments system as punishment for Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The initiative gained momentum after Russian lawmaker Alexander Babakov, deputy chairman of the lower chamber of the Federal Assembly, was cited as claiming the BRICS countries were working on a new payment medium.

IMPORTANCE OF NEW PAYMENT MEDIUM: There are numerous equations about De-dollarization which are hovering around in the sphere of money, power and international relations. De-dollarization advocates argue that doing so will lessen countries' reliance on the dollar and the US economy, making them more resilient to the effects of economic and political shifts in the United States. Followers of De-dollarization also claim that it can lessen the likelihood of financial crises in developing nations by protecting them from the effects of variations in the value of their currencies and interest rates.

INDIA'S POSITION AND RE-POSITION: India's position and re-position in the time of De-dollarization has sparked scores of debates. China, Russia, Brazil, India, the ASEAN countries, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates are just some of the countries working toward de-dollarization. India, a longtime US partner, has joined China in advocating for the use of the rupee as an alternative to the dollar in international trade. The United States values India as a key partner and ally



THE DE-DOLLARISATION TREND IS GAINING MOMENTUM DESPITE OBSTACLES, WHICH MIGHT HAVE SEVERE EFFECTS ON THE US ECONOMY

(The writer is HoD - Digital Marketing and Associate Professor at the School of Management, Presidency University Bangalore)



in the Indo-Pacific. Attempts by Russia and China to decrease dollar usage are seen as more ideological than practical by the Indian government, and the BRICS mobilization to challenge the dollar's hegemony is not publicly supported by New Delhi. The two countries' recent military standoffs may also discourage India from backing China's goal to dethrone the dollar.

China has been a vocal challenger of the dollar's dominance. The deterioration of US-Chinese ties has drawn attention to the power of the US currency and its capacity to obstruct Chinese commerce and technology. These setbacks have prompted China to form a sphere of influence with the BRICS nations rather than participate in the US-dominated global order. Russia has long hoped to use the political might of the BRICS nations to forward the cause of de-dollarization. While India is not expected to play a direct part in any BRICS strategy to lessen the US dollar's clout, it may assist minimize dollar dependency by backing efforts to increase the use of local currencies in international commerce and finance.

In light of China's hostility towards India and her support for Pak-sponsored terrorist activities, it is in India's best interest to align with the United States, a democracy, rather than China under the dictatorial regime of Chinese President Xi Jinping. Experts argue that de-dollarization by India is doable with the right policies in place. India needs to achieve a trade surplus or a current account surplus so that the rupee may be used as a global trading currency. That will lead to an increase in demand for the rupee on the currency exchange market, ending its steady decline.

At the same time, Russia is accumulating up to USD 1 billion every

month in Indian rupee assets that remain stranded outside the nation due to its unequal economic relationship with India. This adds to the stockpile of wealth it has accumulated overseas since the Ukraine war. Since the invasion, Russia has become India's primary source of petroleum imports. Because of the war, European consumers cut back on their spending, thus Russia had to accept a smaller percentage of commerce in home currency and shift goods to the East.

De-dollarization is of significance to India for reasons outside its trade policies. It has also been reported that the nation is interested in talking to Russia and China about finding an alternative to SWIFT. This might open the door for India to use its currency in commerce with nations that are subject to US sanctions. Russia's SPFS and China's CIPS will be integrated into India's local financial messaging system.

India's developing economic relations with Russia and China also factor into the country's interest in de-dollarization. India is already one of Russia's biggest buyers of crude oil, and the two nations have been trying to expand their commerce in other areas as well. Both India and China have been increasing their economic cooperation in recent years, and they have agreed to double their trade to \$100 billion by 2022. Considering these circumstances, it's not unexpected that India is looking to strengthen its commercial connections with Russia and China and find alternatives to SWIFT. However, given the dominance of the US currency in the global financial system, it remains to be seen how effective India will be in encouraging the use of these other payment methods and lessening its dependency on the US dollar.

THE US AND AFTERMATH OF DE-DOLLARIZATION: The de-dollarization trend is gaining momentum despite obstacles, which might have severe effects on the US economy. Because of its status as the world's primary reserve currency, the US dollar has long had access to favourable conditions such as low-interest rates on loans, high trade deficits, and widespread sway. In contrast, the United States stands to lose economic and geopolitical clout if the dollar loses its status as a global reserve currency and medium of exchange to other currencies.

If a new reserve currency or multipolar currency world is formed, it may threaten the US dollar's status as a haven asset and a global liquidity source, which could cause financial instability.

NEED OF THE HOUR: Amidst De-dollarization, India is mulling discussing the possible mechanism to cope with the changing situations. Governments may encourage domestic currencies to be used in international commerce by offering tax breaks and other benefits to companies that do so.

For some imports of petroleum, oil, minerals, and military hardware from Russia, India has been making informal payments in rupees since 2019.

Governments can work together to create non-dollar-based payment systems, such as the Chinese-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Governments may lessen their reliance on the dollar by forming economic relationships with other nations. Governments may invest in other currencies either to hedge against the risk of currency volatility or to challenge the United States Dollar's pre-eminence. Wait and watch this new medium of payment!

M Karunanidhi: 'Thalaivar' who shaped Tamil Nadu

M Karunanidhi's autobiography 'Nenjukku Neethi' gives a glimpse of his life and struggle

Former Tamil Nadu chief minister M Karunanidhi was many things to many people. He was "Thalaivar" to his cadres, a wily politician to his opponents and a visionary to his admirers. His autobiography 'Nenjukku Neethi' shows his life and struggle.



KALYANI SHANKAR

Karunanidhi is among the half-a-dozen leaders who shaped Tamil Nadu. Considering his contribution to state, regional and national politics, it is only fitting for the state government to celebrate his birth centenary for a year from June 3. He died at 94 in August 2018. In his own words, Karunanidhi said, "I have written stories and dialogues for 75 films. I have used my career in films to dispel ignorance among the people in the lower rungs of society, to

(The writer is a senior journalist)

light up their lives, to remove inequities in society, to spread socially reformative and progressive views and to make Tamilians aware of the antiquity, the sweep, the grandeur and the richness of their language." Karunanidhi was chief minister for five terms spread over 19 years. He was DMK chief ten times and legislator 13 times. Growing up amid the Dravidian movement of the 1930s, the multi-faceted Karunanidhi began his life as an activist and journalist. He later became a powerful scriptwriter who used films as a medium to spread the DMK message. He epitomized Dravidian politics, rooted in the Justice Party that emerged in the old Madras Presidency in 1916.

Rising from humble ori-

gins and a champion of Dravidian politics, Karunanidhi joined politics at 14. When Annadurai launched the DMK in 1949, he was part of it. Karunanidhi became an MLA in 1957, a minister in 1967 and chief minister in 1969. He weathered many political storms. Indira Gandhi dismissed his government in 1976 when He opposed the Emergency. Prime Minister Chandrashekar sacked his government in 1990. Meanwhile, his one-time friend M.G. Ramachandran split the party in 1972. He formed a new party Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. Since then, the DMK and AIADMK have ruled the State. The DMK remained out of power from 1977 to 1987. MGR ruled till he died in 1987. After the

assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, AIADMK leader J. Jayalithaa won in alliance with Congress in 1991. Since then, the DMK and the AIADMK have alternated in power except from 2011 to 2021.

He also dabbled in national politics. During the 1969 Congress split, he supported Indira Gandhi. When Jayaprakash Narayan launched the Janata Party, the DMK was part of it. He had a cosy relationship with several national leaders. The DMK was part of all coalitions, including the 1989 National Front, United Front in 1996, NDA in 1999, and UPA in 2004. He declined to be the Prime Minister in 1997 when H.D. Deve Gowda stepped down. Karunanidhi asserted, "En uyaram enakke theriyum (I know my height)."

During the 1969 Congress split, he supported Indira Gandhi. When Jayaprakash Narayan launched the Janata Party, the DMK was part of it.

A consummate politician, Karunanidhi could always gauge the public mood correctly. Just before the 2004 Lok Sabha polls, I asked him how he and other senior leaders like comrade Jyoti Basu accepted Congress chief Sonia Gandhi's (a novice compared to them) leadership. True to his prediction, the UPA defeated the Vajpayee government.

He made and unmade alliances based on electoral fortunes. He believed in no permanent enemies or friends in politics. Though Indira Gandhi got his government dismissed in 1976, he became an ally of Congress four years

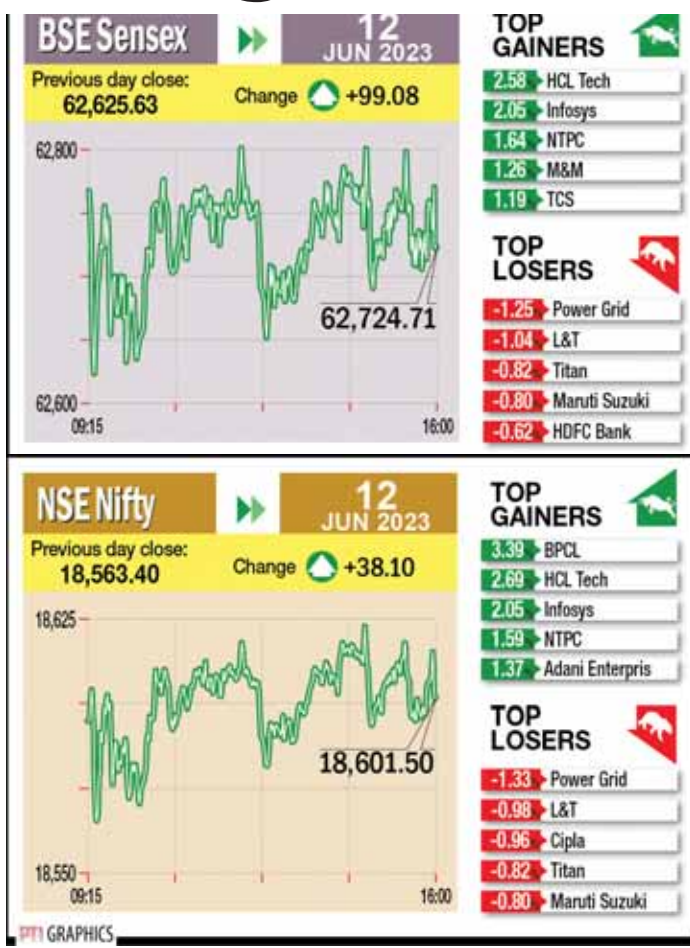
later. They hobnobbed with political leaders virtually across the spectrum. Karunanidhi played a crucial role in Indo-Sri Lankan relations. While MGR supported the LTTE, Karunanidhi had links with Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation, which LTTE finished. He criticized the Indo-Srilankan Accord. Karunanidhi's critics blamed him for his government's failure to take a decisive stand against the massacre of Sri Lankan Tamil in Sri Lanka in 2009. In the seventies, he also faced corruption charges, and the Sarkaria Commission partly acquitted him. The 2G scam in 2010 also was a black mark during the UPA era.

On the plus side, despite consistent complaints that Karunanidhi had made the

party his family property, he kept the cadres with him. He prepared a smooth succession plan and made his son M.K. Stalin succeed him. As a good administrator, he built the basic infrastructure which became the basis for industrialization in the State. Establishing the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation and a range of welfare boards enabled the State to attract investments. Karunanidhi outlived all his opponents. But his place in Tamil Nadu and national politics will be remembered forever. He was known for constantly fighting with the Centre on states' rights and Federalism. Karunanidhi will always be remembered as the most colourful and daring politician of his time. He has left behind a lasting legacy.

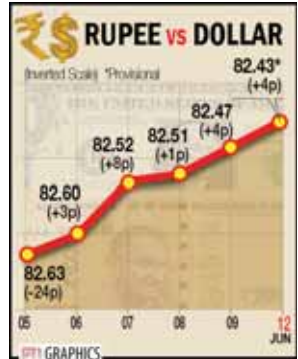
Sensex, Nifty close marginally higher in range-bound trade

PTI ■ MUMBAI
Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty cut short two days of losses and settled with marginal gains in a range-bound trade on Monday as IT, oil and gas and telecom shares advanced amid optimism in the global markets. The 30-share BSE Sensex rose by 99.08 points or 0.16 per cent to settle at 62,724.71. During the day, it gained 179.26 points or 0.28 per cent to 62,804.89.
The NSE Nifty advanced 38.10 points or 0.21 per cent to end at 18,601.50.
From the Sensex pack, Infosys, HCL Technologies, NTPC, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services, Nestle, Tech Mahindra and Bajaj Finance were the major gainers. Power Grid, Larsen & Toubro, Maruti, Titan, HDFC Bank, Wipro, HDFC and ITC were among the laggards.
"The domestic indices are moving with caution as investors step up to a data-loaded week both in domestic and global markets. However, the expectations are optimistic, like the Indian CPI is forecast to moderate and the Fed & Bank of Japan (BoJ) are expected to maintain their policy rates."
"Other major events on the centre stage are domestic IIP, WPI inflation, and policy announcements from European Central Bank (ECB)," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.
Markets traded dull but managed to end marginally in the green, thanks to firm global cues, Ajit Mishra, VP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd said.
The movement on the sectoral front kept traders busy wherein IT and realty posted



Rupee rises 4 paise to close at 82.43 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI
The rupee gained 4 paise to settle at 82.43 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, supported by easing crude oil prices and a positive trend in domestic equities.
At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 82.45 against the US dollar and settled at 82.43 (provisional), up 4 paise over its previous close.
During the day, the domestic unit witnessed an intra-day high of 82.40 and a low of 82.48.
On Friday, the rupee closed at 82.47 against the US currency.
The rupee traded on a flat to positive note on Monday on positive domestic markets and weakness in US Dollar. Weak crude oil prices also supported the domestic unit, said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.
However, FII outflows capped sharp gains.
Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital market on Friday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 308.97 crore, according to exchange data.
The US dollar declined on rising expectations of a pause in a rate hike in the June FOMC meeting. This has also led to



Industrial production grows 4.2% in April

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
India's industrial production growth rose to 4.2 per cent in April from 1.7 per cent in March 2023, mainly due to good performance by the manufacturing and mining sectors, according to official data released on Monday.
The factory output growth measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) stood at 6.7 per cent in April 2022.
As per the IIP data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the manufacturing sector's output grew 4.9 per cent in April 2023 against a 5.6 per cent expansion a year ago.
Power generation declined 1.1 per cent in April 2023 compared to a growth of 11.8 per cent.
Mining output, however, rose by 5.1 per cent during the month under review against a growth of 8.4 in the year-ago period.
As per use-based classification, the capital goods segment recorded a 6.2 per cent growth in April compared to a 12 per cent expansion a year ago.
Consumer durables output during the month declined by 3.5 per cent against a 7.2 per cent growth a year ago.
Consumer non-durable goods output grew 10.7 per cent against a contraction of 0.8 per cent a year earlier.
Infrastructure/construction goods posted a growth of 12.8 per cent compared to a four per cent expansion in the same period a year ago.
The data also showed that the output of primary goods logged 1.9 per cent growth in the month against 10.3 per cent in the year-ago period.
The intermediate goods output in April grew by 0.8 per cent compared to a 7.1 per cent growth during the corresponding month last year.
For fiscal 2022-23, the growth in IIP works out to be 5.2 per cent, down from 11.4 per cent in the preceding year.



RBI permits banks to undertake compromise settlement of wilful defaults, fraud accounts

PTI ■ MUMBAI
In order to ensure maximum recovery from distressed assets, the Reserve Bank of India has allowed banks to go for compromise settlement of fraud accounts and wilful defaults.
All regulated entities (REs) will be required to put in place board-approved policies for undertaking compromise settlements, with the borrowers as well as for technical write-offs laying down the process to be followed for all compromise settlements and technical write-offs, with specific guidance on the necessary conditions precedent, the RBI has said in a notification.
Conditions would include minimum ageing, deterioration in collateral value etc., it said.
The policies would also put in place a graded framework for the examination of staff accountability in such cases with reasonable thresholds and timelines as may be decided by the board.
REs may undertake compromise settlements or technical write-offs in respect of accounts categorised as wilful defaulters or fraud without prejudice to the criminal proceeding underway against such debtors.
"In respect of compromise settlements, the policy shall inter alia contain provisions relating to permissible sacrifice for various categories of exposures while arriving at the settlement amount, after prudently reckoning the current realisable value of security/collateral, where available," as per the notification.
The methodology for arriving at the realisable value of the security shall also form part of the policy. The objective would be to maximise the possible recovery from a distressed borrower at minimum expense, in the best interest of the Regulated Entity (RE).
"The compromise settlements and technical write-offs would be without prejudice to any mutually agreed contractual provisions between the RE and the borrower relating to future contingent realisations or recovery by the RE, subject to such claims not being recognised in any manner on the balance sheet of REs at the time of the settlement or subsequently till actual realisation of such receivables," it said.
Any such claims recognised on the balance sheet of the RE would render the arrangement to be treated as restructured as per the extant guidelines, it added. In respect of borrowers subject to compromise settlements, the notification said, there would be a cooling period as determined by the respective board-approved policies before the REs can assume fresh exposures to such borrowers.

Jaguar Land Rover plans annual investment of 3 billion pounds by FY26

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Tata Motors' owned Jaguar Land Rover plans an annual investment of 3 billion pounds while targeting revenue of over 30 billion pounds by FY26, according to an investor presentation by the company.
Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), which makes SUVs such as Range Rover, Defender and Discovery under the Land Rover brand and Jaguar luxury cars, expects to have revenue of over 28 billion pounds in FY24.
Tata Motors shared the presentation to be made by JLR on stock exchanges.
Under its 'Reimagine' strategy, which was designed to address the key challenges facing its business, JLR had aimed to become a more agile business, with a simplified manufacturing operation and an ambition to achieve positive cash net-of-debt by 2025.
In its 'Investor Day 2023' presentation, JLR said, "Reimagine will deliver" and its investment target is 3 billion pounds per annum.
Further, the company is looking at free cash flow of 2 billion pounds by FY24 and "continuing to be significantly positive thereafter".
In terms of revenue, the company said its target is over



28 billion pounds in FY24 and over 30 billion pounds in FY26.
In the fiscal ended March 31, 2023, JLR had clocked revenue of 22.81 billion pounds. The EBIT margin will also improve from over 6 per cent in FY24 to more than 10 per cent by FY26.

On its electrification programme, JLR said its Range Rover is "the vanguard of our EV transformation and profit generation" while the Jaguar brand will transform into a "radical, modern luxury EV brand in 2025".
Earlier last month, the company had stated it would invest 15 billion pounds over five years in its electrification and digital transformation.
The company's Halewood plant in the UK would become an all-electric manufacturing facility and over 11,300 employees and partners have been reskilled for electrification with a further 11,625 in training.

Nasdaq to buy financial software company Adenza in \$10.5 billion cash-and-stock deal

AP ■ NEW YORK
Nasdaq is buying Adenza, a company that makes software used on Wall Street, for USD 10.5 billion in cash and stock. In a cash-and-stock deal valued at USD 10.5 billion.
The acquisition from owner, an investment company includes USD 5.75 billion in cash and 85.6 million shares of Nasdaq common stock. Nasdaq CEO Adena Friedman has been pushing the company further into tech, expanding beyond its roll as a marketplace for trading that is reliant largely on trading volumes to thrive.
"From fast-evolving global regulations to rapidly increasing pressures to modernise

infrastructure, our clients are seeking trusted partners equipped to support them in this challenging environment," Friedman said in a written statement. "Nasdaq aspires to be that partner every day, and with Adenza we can offer an even broader range of mission-critical solutions that enhance the liquidity, transparency, and integrity of the world's financial system." Adenza was created through the combination of Calypso and AxiomSL. Calypso serves capital markets participants with end-to-end treasury, risk, and collateral management workflows, and AxiomSL supports financial institutions with leading regulatory and compliance software.
Nasdaq said Monday that the acquisition complements its marketplace technology and anti-financial crime solutions and enhances its offerings across a broader spectrum of regulatory technology, compliance, and risk management solutions.



Bayer, Cargill ink pact to empower smallholder farmers in India with digital solutions

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Global life sciences firm Bayer on Monday said it has signed an agreement with US-based food major Cargill to empower smallholder farmers with digital solutions, including comprehensive information on market prices, weather forecasts, and pre- to post-harvest insights.
Drawing upon the capabilities of innovative platforms such as Cargill's 'Digital Saathi' - a mobile-first, AI-driven service platform tailored to hyper-localised needs, and Bayer's Better Life Farming Centres that supports over 5,00,000 smallholder farmers, this strategic partnership is dedicated to improving market access for smallholder farmers, it said in a statement.
"This partnership between Bayer and Cargill endeavours to connect with 3 million farmers across India within the next five years. Initially, the partnership will be implemented in Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh and subsequently expand to other regions," the company added.

POCO India eyes 75-80% business growth in 2023

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Smartphone player POCO India expects a 75-80 per cent year-on-year jump in business in 2023, mainly due to demand for its handsets in the medium and economy segment, a top company official said on Monday.
POCO India Country Head Himanshu Tandon told PTI that as per market research firm Canalis, the overall smartphone market in India has declined 10 to 15 per cent and online sales dropped 20 per cent, but Xiaomi's sub-brand has emerged as the fastest growing online label, with a 68 per cent jump in sales for the March 2023 quarter.
The launch of three models in the C-series under Rs 10,000



and X5 Pro in the price range of Rs 20,000-25,000 segment fuelled the company's growth in the first quarter of 2023, he noted.
"It's the start of the year, and we have taken very aggressive targets. From a YoY perspective, we want to have 75 to 80 per cent growth compared to last year," Tandon said.
He said the first quarter has been on track with 68 per cent growth, and preliminary numbers for the second quarter are even higher than the first quarter.
According to Tandon, loyalty and upgrade along with 60 per cent of repeat customers contributed to the growth of the company sales.
"We have also started focus-

ing on offline channels. We have appointed four distributors in Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai and Ahmedabad. That is also giving us a certain growth. From an overall growth point of view, I think few of the big brands have vacated certain space in the online space and it was an opportune time for us to grab that share," he said.
According to a market research firm, International Data Corporation's (IDC) Worldwide Quarterly Mobile Phone Tracker report smartphone shipments dipped to a four-year low of 31 million in the first quarter and the overall smartphone market is expected to see a flat growth this year.
The decline in smartphone shipment has been mainly due to the weakness of demand in the sub-Rs 10,000 segment.
POCO claims that the C-series smartphones in the sub-Rs 10,000 filled the void that was left with the exit of several players from the segment.
"We saw a lot of brands, especially vacating that space. We are trying to focus on the under Rs 10,000 segment. We are trying to build a 5G portfolio around the Rs 10,000 price band. In the coming few months also, we are trying to bridge our Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000 price bracket by bringing affordable 5G devices, which will also make sure that our growth remains intact," Tandon said.

Workshop on innovation, entrepreneurship organised

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
Amaravati: The Quality Assurance Cell of APSICHE organised a Regional Workshop with VIT-AP University on June 9.
The workshop aimed to develop a roadmap for Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Startup Centres (EISCs) in Andhra Pradesh.
The event aimed to expand the EISC network, promote innovation and entrepreneurship among students and faculty, and boost the economy.
The workshop brought academicians together to discuss the future of EISCs in the



Decline in demand for delivery executives

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
WorkIndia, a leading tech platform for blue-collar recruitment in India, has reported a decline in demand for delivery executives in 2023 after a surge in 2022.
In 2022, Indore, Chandigarh, and Jaipur experienced significant growth rates, but in 2023, all these cities saw a decline in job openings. Kolkata had the highest de-growth rate at -83.05 per cent, followed by Lucknow and Hyderabad.
WorkIndia predicts a gradual recovery and stabilization of the delivery industry in the coming year, said Kunal Patil, Co-Founder and CEO, WorkIndia.

RINKU, JITESH SET TO GET T20I CALL-UP

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

There might not be a knee-jerk reaction to India's second successive World Test Championship final defeat but senior players Cheteshwar Pujara and Umesh Yadav's places could come under the scanner before the team travels to West Indies for a two-Test series.

Yashasvi Jaiswal and Mukesh Kumar are in contention to replace the duo as the selection committee starts preparing the next batch of players for tougher assignments.

India will have a month-long tour of West Indies where they would start with two Test matches starting July 12, followed by three ODIs and five T20Is in which a completely new team under Hardik Pandya's captaincy will be plying its trade with IPL performers likely to be rewarded.

While another WTC final defeat will hurt the team, there is a strong feeling that the Shiv Sunder Das-led selection committee and head coach Rahul Dravid will be looking at some options going into the next WTC cycle, which starts with the series in the Caribbean.

The two weak links as of now seem to be Pujara and Umesh, who haven't been up to the mark for a long time.

"You need to strike a balance. Selection is a process of elimination but you need that blend of youth and experience. The idea should be long-term and you have to look at two-year cycle now."

"I believe Yashasvi Jaiswal is ready for international cricket. He has scored double hundreds in Ranji, Irani and Duleep Trophy. Looks solid in terms of temperament and could be groomed while being given enough chances to grow," former



WTC: Team India players lose 100% match fees, Gill penalised additional 15%

PTI ■ DUBAI

Indian players have been fined their entire match fees for maintaining a slow over rate while opener Shubman Gill was docked an additional 15 per cent for criticising the umpire's decision to rule him out in a debatable call during the World Test Championship final.

The Australian players were also fined 80 per cent of their fees for maintaining a slow over rate during the marquee-clash, which they won by 209 runs in London on Sunday.

"It was confirmed shortly after the conclusion of the match on Sunday's final day that India will lose all of their match fees for their slow over rate, with Australia also docked 80 percent of their match fees."

"In accordance with Article 2.22 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, players are fined 20 per cent of their match

fee for every over their side fails to bowl in the allotted time," the ICC said in a statement on Monday. The fines were imposed after India were ruled to be five overs short of the target after time allowances were taken into consideration, while Australia were found to be four overs short. Indian players, who are part of the playing XI earn Rs 15 lakh per Test while the reserve players get Rs 7.5 lakhs each.

Gill was found guilty of "breaching article 2.7 which relates to public criticism or inappropriate comment in relation to an incident occurring in an international match."

During India's second innings, television umpire Richard Kettleborough had adjudged a catch by Cameron Green to remove Gill had been taken cleanly. However after the day's play, the youngster had posted a TV screen grab of the replay in which the ball seemed to be touching the ground.

national selector Devang Gandhi told PTI.

Another former national selector, who refused to be quoted, was critical of the BCCI not having any A Tour programme since the tour of Bangladesh last December.

"Look, Umesh is at the business end of his career but with no A tour programme, you don't know who all are ready. There was a time we had Mayank Agarwal, Rishabh Pant, Hanuma Vihari, Mohammed Siraj, Navdeep Saini ready through consistent A tours and shadow series."

"Now you don't know. I presume only form bowler is Mukesh Kumar but he is a

seamer and not an express pacer," the selector said.

WILL ROHIT PLAY TEST?

While one can't put a date on KL Rahul's comeback from a thigh surgery, he is no longer in leadership contention. Will skipper Rohit Sharma, considering his current form and fitness, continue to play Test cricket for two more years and complete the next cycle, when he would be nearly 38? That's a million dollar question at the moment.

Another question is who is a better bet as vice-captain in next one year if Pujara is phased out considering that the West Indies is one Test team against

whom a youngster would have easy initiation.

"The problem is that you give a West Indies Test series to Pujara and if he scores, you have got to persist with him for one more year as there are no Tests after this till December. So do you do that or straightaway get a youngster and get him ready for bigger battles," the former selector questioned.

For many, Shubman Gill at 23 is at the correct age where he can be prepared over time for a leadership role. A short-term solution could be to hand it over to a sure-shot all-format player like Ravindra Jadeja.

However, Gandhi asked why not someone like R Ashwin,

who has a fantastic cricket brain.

"Why not Ashwin? And if you say that he is not a certainty overseas, then I would say even Rahane, despite being a vice-captain, was dropped from playing XI at one point. So even Ashwin can be considered or Rahane for a short time before Gill cements his place in Test XI," Gandhi opined.

RINKU, JITESH FOR T20S

One format where there won't be any ambiguity is T20 Internationals where Hardik Pandya will lead India, including in next year's T20 World Cup in the Americas (West Indies and USA).

The T20I team would be purely based on IPL performers and one can expect the likes of Rinku Singh and Jitesh Sharma to make the cut in the final squad, as teams in the past lacked finishers.

Ruturaj Gaikwad's comeback and Yashasvi Jaiswal's inclusions also look imminent while Mohit Sharma could earn a well-deserved comeback after his 27 wickets in last IPL.

While Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli are being phased out of the shortest format, the likes of Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj could be re-considered their workload and the upcoming ODIs before the World Cup.



Australia hailed for 'momentous' WTC title but told: now win Ashes

AP ■ SYDNEY

Australia's World Test Championship triumph was hailed on Monday as "momentous" — but warned it will quickly be forgotten if they do not win the Ashes.

Pat Cummins' side crushed India by 209 runs in the final at The Oval in a show of strength ahead of the Ashes against arch-rivals England starting on Friday.

The Sydney Daily Telegraph said Australia "deserve praise" for routing Rohit Sharma's team, but warned: "Deep down they know that the main prize is still to be won."

"Because the brutal truth is this fine accomplishment from Pat Cummins' men will soon be forgotten if Australia doesn't win the Ashes," said the tabloid.

"The good news is, performing in the pressure of a Test Championship final seems a pretty good way to warm up for

England." Australian selectors now face a major decision on whether to stick with seamer Scott Boland for the first Test at Edgbaston or bring back pace spearhead Josh Hazlewood, who is returning from injury.

After Boland's second-innings exploits at The Oval, including the prize scalp of Virat Kohli on Sunday on his way to figures of 3-46 in 16 overs, local media agreed it would be almost impossible to drop him.

Australia's victory was the culmination of a two-year programme of Tests that saw them win 12 out of 20 matches, with five draws and three defeats.

Local media said there had been "turbulence and reinvention" after former skipper Tim Paine stepped down over a sexting scandal in late 2021 and Justin Langer quit as coach in acrimonious circumstances months later.

With the more reserved Andrew McDonald now in charge and Cummins growing into his role as skipper, national broadcaster ABC said Australia had morphed into "a more balanced, rounded and complete side".

"Not every decision has been right, not every situation perfectly handled, but as Cummins wrestled that (WTC) mace in front of a team that is now unequivocally his, it's hard to argue against them," it said.

"Now comes the chance to prove it, once and for all, in the biggest Test series of a generation." The Sydney Morning Herald praised Cummins and McDonald for "creating an environment in which individuals could find their best paths to culminate in team success."

"Preparation and planning has been very much tailored to each player, with some formidable results," it said.

India to play Pakistan in ODI WC 2023 on Oct 15 in Ahmedabad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will open their ODI World Cup campaign against Australia in Chennai on October 8 while Ahmedabad will host their much-anticipated match against arch-rivals Pakistan a week later, according to BCCI's draft schedule for the tournament.

"The BCCI shared the draft schedule with the ICC, which then sent it to the participating countries for feedback before a final schedule is put out early next week," ESPNcricinfo reported on Monday.

As per the initial draft, the tournament will begin on October 5 with reigning champions England taking on last edition's runner-up side New Zealand in Ahmedabad, which will also host the final on November 19.



The venues for the semifinals, which are likely to be played on November 15 and 16, are yet to be decided.

Hosts India, who last won the ODI World Cup in 2011 at home, will play their league phase matches across nine cities, including, Kolkata, Mumbai, New

Delhi and Bengaluru. They will take on Pakistan on October 15.

Pakistan, meanwhile, will play their league matches across five cities.

"Pakistan are slotted to meet the two teams progressing from the Qualifier on October 6 and 12 in Hyderabad, and then Australia in Bengaluru (October 20), Afghanistan (October 23) and South Africa (October 27) in Chennai, Bangladesh in Kolkata (October 31), New Zealand in Bengaluru (November 5, day match) and England in Kolkata (November 12)," the report read.

Australia's match against Trans-Tasman rivals New Zealand in Dharamsala on October 29 and against England in Ahmedabad on November 4 are some of the other big fixtures.

A total of 10 teams will participate in the tournament. Out of these, eight teams have already been decided and while two other teams will qualify for the main tournament via the qualifiers.

With a little over four months left for the marquee event to begin, there has been an unprecedented delay in releasing the schedule.

The schedule of the last two editions of the tournament — 2015 and 2019 — was finalised over a year in advance.

INDIA'S TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:
India vs Australia, Oct 8, Chennai
India vs Afghanistan, Oct 11, Delhi
India vs Pakistan, Oct 15, Ahmedabad
India vs Bangladesh, Oct 19, Pune
India vs New Zealand, Oct 22, Dharamsala
India vs England, Oct 29, Lucknow
India vs Qualifier, Nov 2, Mumbai
India vs South Africa, Nov 5, Kolkata

Smith-Head 285-run stand was the difference: Finch

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Former Australia white-ball skipper Aaron Finch believes the 285-run first innings partnership between Steve Smith and Travis Head made the difference in the World Test Championship final against India at The Oval.

"What an achievement to be crowned World Test Champions. I think Travis Head and Steve Smith's partnership was the difference in the game, but that's just something Steve Smith does," Finch told 'SEN Radio'.

"When he (Smith) turns up to England he seems to walk out and get 100s at will. It was a brilliant performance and I'm very happy for the team," he added.

Following the bitter loss, India captain Rohit Sharma has called for a three-Test WTC final, while also questioning the lack of preparation time for the marquee clash as it was scheduled just after the IPL. But Finch begs to differ.



"I think it's just the reality of the scheduling and the time constraints on fixtures at the moment," he said.

"I've got no issues with it, I think if it's drawn out over three Tests, what happens if a team gets annihilated? It becomes a bit of a waste of time. "We all play sport for the wins and the losses. I don't have any issue with it at all."

Playing Test cricket for Australia more important than IPL money: Starc

PTI ■ LONDON

One of the finest pacers of the current generation, Mitchell Starc keeps away from the franchise cricket, including the IPL, despite the handsome money on offer as he wants to be at his "best" playing for Australia.

"There's nothing I love more in cricket than to sit back with my teammates at the end of a Test win and reflect on the success we've had that week. To be able to pull on the baggy green with a lot of my close mates, guys I've grown up in the game with," Starc said.

"Franchise cricket is great, but you can be bought or sold or traded in 12 months, whereas this is an opportunity (Playing Tests) that I've been fortunate enough to have over 10 years now... To be able to pull on the baggy green with a lot of my close mates, guys I've grown up in the game with."

"The traditionalist in me still hopes there is a generation of boys and girls who want to represent their country in Test cricket. But the easy money is in franchise cricket, it's the fast track to notoriety," he added.

The 33-year-old, who last played franchise cricket back in 2015 for the Royal Challengers Bangalore in the IPL, is clear in his mind that Test cricket will remain his priority for the foreseeable future.

"I'd certainly love to play in the IPL again, but my goal for a long time has been to be at my best for Australia, no matter the format," Starc asserted.

For Starc, playing Test cricket for Australia is paramount, a path he hopes many youngsters will follow in future.

Several colleagues of Starc have appeared in various T20 leagues across the globe such as IPL, Big Bash, but the left-arm pacer has managed to stay away from the lure.

"I enjoyed it (IPL), likewise I enjoyed my time at Yorkshire 10 years ago, but Australia will always sit at the top. I don't regret any of it, money will come and go but I'm very grateful for the opportunities I've had," Starc



Afghanistan confident ahead of Bangladesh Test

AP ■ DHAKA

Afghanistan skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi is confident of his side's chances against Bangladesh in their return to Test cricket after more than two years, despite resting key leg spinner Rashid Khan.

"Expectation is high, we are here to play good cricket and want to win the game," Shahidi told reporters in Dhaka on Monday.

Afghanistan take on their hosts in a one-off Test series on Wednesday, their first Test match since facing Zimbabwe in Abu Dhabi in March 2021.

"We had a lot of gaps," Shahidi said. "We play domestic

first-class games and lots of players are involved in that."

The Afghanistan team — from a country still feeling the after-effects of decades of conflict and the 2021 Taliban takeover — have won three of six Tests since being granted Test status in 2018.

Those wins include their only previous Test against Bangladesh.

Rashid has played in five of Afghanistan's six Test matches, picking up 34 wickets at an average of 22.35, but is being rested for the game after a gruelling campaign in the Indian Premier League.

His exploits include 11 wickets in the Test against



Bangladesh, which they won by 224 runs in Chittagong in 2019.

"It will be challenging," Shahidi said. "We all know that Rashid is one of the main bowlers. He did very well in the past in Test matches. Still, we have another option like wrist spinners and they will perform well, inshallah (God willing)."

Shahidi, who scored an unbeaten 200 in the Zimbabwe Test, said the 2019 win over their hosts would inspire the side to do well again here.

"It inspires us, because we played only one Test here and we won that. So that gives us a lot of confidence," he said.

Bangladesh will be without their main all-rounder and cap-

tain, Shakib Al Hasan, who has been nursing a finger injury.

Stand-in skipper Liton Das said they would take Afghanistan seriously despite Rashid's absence.

"We will take Afghanistan the same way we would have taken them if Rashid Khan was present," said Rashid.

"We also had a gap in Tests -- we last played a Test match in April and had to switch to white-ball cricket. But I think we are at least ahead of them, as we have been playing Test cricket regularly for many days," he said.

Bangladesh defeated Ireland in their last Test match, but have lost eight of their previous nine matches.