















## FIRST COLUMN

## ARE WE LACKING COMMUNICATION?

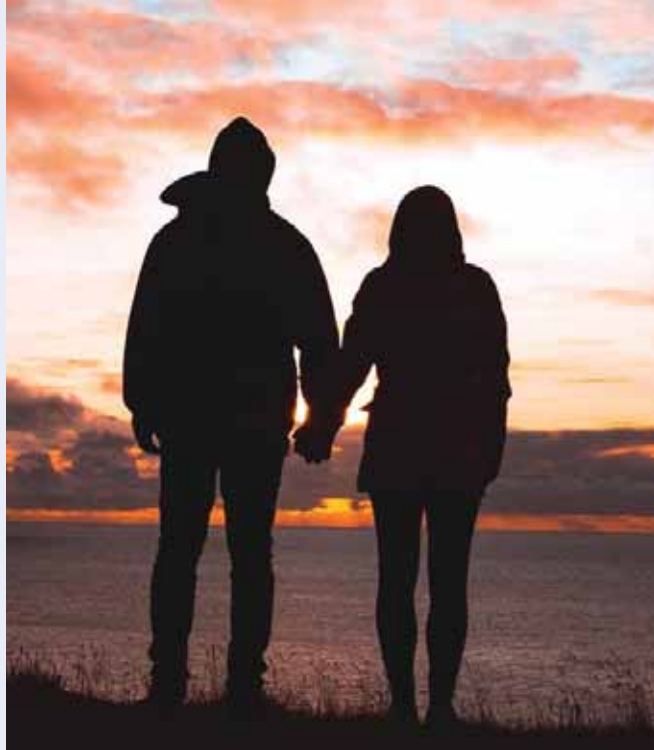
Communicate well to express yourself and to know the expectations of others



SAKSHI SETHI

In the words of Theo Gold, "Communication is the ticket to success if one pays attention and learn to do it effectively." Friendships and romantic relationships make the lives of an individual go merry-go-round. Without them, their lives would be dull and lonely. Communication means understanding that people will not know what they think unless one tells them. It is one of the most important things that one needs to establish in all relationships. When one talks about communication, it means one is talking about telling the people around them, their wants, their needs, their likes and dislikes. The importance of communication can never be ignored. One needs to understand that communicating effectively depends on more variables and how we manage them. Quite often an individual misses out on communication because of little time to spare and thinks that chat mode is a much quicker way of communicating even on the go but some situations need to be more personal.

Communicating effectively depends on many more variables and how one manages it can have vastly different outcomes. Effective communication boosts productivity but poor communication can be disastrous. Remember, lack of communication leaves room for imagination because instead of knowing how the other person is feeling, an individual just ends up assuming. The worst part is that the individual already plays the other party's role in the conversation that never took place and creates emotional responses to it. Also, it breeds assumptions about what the other person is thinking or feeling resulting in room for doubt. Lack of communication arises when someone experiences challenges with effectively communicating their needs and expectations.



Healthy communication in any relationship – be it marriage, friendship or workplace helps create space for people to share their thoughts and feelings, express their needs, set healthy boundaries, learn to deal with relationship conflicts together and resolve issues as and when they arise so that they don't become problematic. If there is a problem, one should learn to speak up and tell.

Improving communication skills is an ongoing process and just like most learned skills, the more time and practice an individual puts into it the more improvements can one see. Remember, people who communicate well can clearly express themselves and their needs and understand the expectations that others have set for them. But this isn't a skill that always comes naturally rather it can take time and practice to truly master. Poor communication doesn't have to signal the end of a relationship instead it can be used as an opportunity to practice and improve.

(The writer is an educator)

## Fertiliser subsidies are not the solution

Instead of pumping more subsidies the Government should push for nano fertilisers which are efficient and cost-effective



UTTAM GUPTA

The Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare and Chemicals and Fertilizers Mansukh Mandaviya has stated that during 2023-24, around Rs 46,000 crore would be needed for fertilizer subsidy payments over and above Rs 175,000 crore being the budget estimate (BE) given by the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the budget presented on February 1, 2023. On the other hand, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) feels, payments could be even less than BE.

Fertilizer subsidy is payments made to manufacturers or importers to cover the excess of the cost of production/import and distribution (or cost of supply) over a low maximum retail price (MRP) they are directed by the Union government to charge from the farmers. The subsidy on each ton of fertilizer produced (or imported) and sold is the difference between the cost of supply and MRP. Multiplied by the total quantity of fertilizer sold, it gives aggregate subsidy payments.

In the case of urea, MRP is under 'statutory' control. The excess cost of supply over MRP is reimbursed to the manufacturer as a subsidy which varies from unit to unit depending on the cost. These reimbursements are made under the so-called New Pricing Scheme (NPS). For non-urea fertilizers which are de jure decontrolled, the MRP is 'indirectly' controlled. The government gives a 'uniform' subsidy on a per-nutrient basis to all manufacturers and importers under the Nutrient Based Scheme (NBS). The latter must deduct this from the cost to arrive at the MRP. All these exercises/determinations are made by the fertilizer ministry and arrive at the tentative estimates of subsidy requirements under each category viz. urea and non-urea fertilizers. The precise number is finalized in consultation with the MoF.

What makes the fertilizer minister feel that the actual requirement will be more than the BE for 2023-24?

For a better understanding, we need to look at both the financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24. For 2022-23, against BE of Rs 105,000 crore, Sitharaman put the revised estimate (RE) at Rs 225,000 crore. This was based on actual payments during the first 10 months of the FY and likely outgo during the remaining two months i.e. February and March 2023. The actual was even higher at Rs 253,000 crore.

Under a business-as-usual scenario, if the allocation for 2022-23 had remained frozen at the level of RE i.e. Rs 225,000 crore, the shortfall of Rs 28,000 crore would have to be carried forward to 2023-24 and paid for from the current year's budget. Now, that full amount has been provided in 2022-23 itself, hence no spillover, Rs 28,000 crore need not be paid from the 2023-24 budget.

Subsidy payments during 2022-23 leapt to a peak of over Rs 250,000 crore because global fertilizer prices increased sharply. For instance, in April 2022, the price of urea touched US\$980 per ton while that of di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) – a widely used fertilizer in the non-urea category – was US\$925 per ton. The price of phosphoric acid and ammonia – raw materials (RMs) used in the production of non-urea fertilizers – were US\$1,530 per ton



and US\$1,050 per ton respectively. The price of muriate of potash (MOP) was US\$590 per ton.

The price of imported LNG – it meets over one-third of natural gas requirements for domestic production of urea – was at a high of around US\$24 per million Btu (British thermal unit) in April 2022. The price of domestic gas (it supplies the remaining two-thirds) for old and regulated fields was US\$ 6.1 per mmBtu whereas for supplies from difficult deep water and ultra-deep-water (D/UD) fields, it was US\$ 9.92 per mmBtu. From October 2022, these prices increased to US\$8.57 per mmBtu and US\$12.6 per mmBtu respectively.

Since last year, there has been a substantial drop in the prices of all fertilizers and RMs. Currently, the prices are urea US\$333 per ton; DAP: US\$540/ton; phosphoric acid: US\$ 990 per ton; ammonia: US\$ 248 per ton and MOP: US\$ 422 per ton. The price of imported LNG is down to around US\$12-13 per mmBtu. As for the price of domestic gas, on supplies from old and regulated fields, currently, it is US\$6.50 per mmBtu. For supplies from D/UD, it remains high at US\$12.1 per mmBtu; but their share in domestic gas is only 30 per cent.

In short, during the current year, prices of all fertilizers and RMs are substantially lower than during 2022-23 and these are maintaining their downward trajectory. For instance, the cost of DAP is expected to fall further to around US\$ 300-350 per ton. With no change in the price paid

by farmers (read: MRP), the lower cost should lead to a corresponding reduction in subsidy outgo.

Accordingly, on May 19, 2023, the Union Cabinet approved a significant cut in the per kilogram subsidy rate for nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potash (K) for the Kharif 2023 season (April, September) under NBS for P&K fertilizers. The subsidy outgo during this period will be Rs 38,000 crore down from Rs 61,000 crore spent during the last Kharif 2022 season. Given the continuing reduction in prices, there may be a further sizeable reduction in subsidies under NBS during the second half of the current FY. Meanwhile, the government has also reduced the subsidy rates for January – March 2023 'retrospectively' to reflect the reduction in global prices for those three months. This will be adjusted against payments to manufacturers/importers during the current FY.

Significant savings in subsidy should be possible by promoting the use of nano-fertilizers. These are fertilizers in the form of nanoparticles and are applied in liquid form. Their efficiency is many times more than conventional fertilizers. For instance, a 500-ml bottle of nano-DAP is equivalent to a 50-kg bag of conventional DAP. The former is available to farmers for Rs 600 without any subsidy support, against the latter being available at more than double this price or Rs 1,350 and that too with substantial subsidy support.

During 2023-24, the Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative (IFFCO) which has developed the technology, plans to produce 50 million bottles of nano-DAP. This will replace 2.5 million tons of conventional DAP resulting in significant savings. Following the commissioning of three plants in the public sector (April 2023), domestic production of urea is expected to increase by 2-3 million tons. This will result in an equivalent reduction in import and turn, subsidy payments. All the above factors point towards containing subsidy outgo within the BE of Rs 175,000 crore. Then, why does the fertilizer minister say 'more will be needed'?

He argues that at the beginning of the current FY, manufacturers were holding inventories – stuff that was purchased during 2022-23 at high prices – which should be eligible for subsidy at higher rates. This is a flawed argument. This is because when prices rise and the government gives higher subsidies (for instance, in the second half of 2021-22), it didn't mop up the benefit accruing to manufacturers on the inventory that was earlier bought at a lower price. Likewise, there isn't merit in another argument for a 'less than required cut in subsidy rate' just because they suffered some loss during the second half of 2022-23. To conclude, MoF shouldn't agree to the fertilizer ministry's demand for more funds towards subsidy payments. The latter should make efforts to keep the actual lower than BE.



SIGNIFICANT SAVINGS IN SUBSIDY SHOULD BE POSSIBLE BY PROMOTING THE USE OF NANO FERTILISERS. THESE ARE FERTILISERS IN THE FORM OF NANOPARTICLES AND ARE APPLIED IN LIQUID FORM

(The writer is a policy analyst)

## Modi's US visit paves the way for lasting India-US relations

Modi's visit is a path-breaking event that will take India-US ties to a new high and checkmate China's policy of aggression on LoC

Indian prime minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to the United States assumes a lot of importance for the rest of the world when US President, Joe Biden says that two great friends, two great powers and two great friends can outline the course and path of the 21st century. One of the biggest takeaways even recognized by the entire world pertains to future strategy which will counter the growing influence of China and its expansionism laced with debt trap policy to create a security threat to India and the US.

Experts opine that PM's visit will carve out the future course of action and strengthen his vision of 'ATAMNIRBHAR BHART' through defence deals and emerging



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(The writer is a senior journalist)

technologies. It will be an impetus to trade and defence cooperation as both nations have agreed that General Electronics will produce jet engines in India in collaboration with Hindustan Aeronautics which will be used for Tejas. Indian Shipyard can be used for repairs by US Navy ships besides agreeing to purchase MQ-9B Sea Guardian drones. Both sides will witness enhanced activities and greater cooperation in the areas of semiconductors, critical minerals, technology, space, and defence. US chip maker, Micron, is poised to establish a USD 2.7 billion semiconductor testing and packaging unit in Gujarat which will ensure the participation of the government of

India and Gujarat government thereby investing 50% and 20% respectively.

Experts say that America has enjoyed an unchallenged prominent position in the world arena, especially after the downfall of Russia in the nineties leading to the end of the Cold War and focused on its self-centred interests only which had dictated its illogical stand on Pakistan's open support to terrorists in Kashmir. In this changed geo-political scenario, India is gradually occupying centre stage which can be attributed to its growing economic potential and meaningful space being attained by it in advanced technology thereby fast emerging as a challenger to China in future.

It was national security

advisor, Ajit Doval's visit to the United States six months ago when he expressed his opinion about India-US ties to counterpart, Sullivan that "time is running fast hence we do not have much time at our disposal which warrants concrete road map to face challenges including China's threat on security." Sullivan concluded his discussion with Doval in Delhi before Modi visited the US. Both NSAs unveiled ambitious long-term plans for Indo-US collaboration in seven specific high-technology areas, next-generation telecommunication strategy, semiconductors, defence and artificial intelligence. They announced the second Track-1.5 dialogue on the initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies

(ICET) which had been organized by industry chamber CII. But both top officials confined themselves to covering bilateral and regional issues only and nothing beyond it. Earlier, the spade-work was done by US defence secretary, Lloyd Austin who held several meetings with defence minister Rajnath Singh and senior Indian officials in New Delhi. Similarly, Foreign Secretary, Vinay Kwatra met Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland in the US to prepare the ground for Modi's visit and the above engagements highlighted the shared objectives of the two nations in terms of close cooperation and regional security.

A huge welcome was accorded by the Indian dias-

pora at the prestigious Kennedy Center organized by Aghi and USISPF who have got a lot of relevance in American politics and India's growth. According to FM Sitharaman, union finance minister, overseas Indians' remittances to India increased by 12% to 100 USD in 2022 as compared to 2021 which is of utmost importance to India's economy. Some human rights activists did raise their concerns about the human rights violation in India and ex-president, Barack Obama was also critical when he said "if you do not protect the rights of ethnic minorities in India, then there is a strong possibility India at some point starts pulling apart and we've seen what happens when you start

getting those kinds of large internal conflicts."

Biden's red carpet to Modi is the evidence of all our efforts in America to take present Indo-US ties to the next level. Biden has even attacked China and praised India's democracy despite some concerns. China has not relished America's open-arm policy towards India hence it has accused the US of trying to block Dragon's progress. Modi's visit was billed as a path-breaking event that will take India-US ties to a new height and checkmate policy of aggression of China on LOC besides helping the US to retain its status of Super Power which seems to be dangerous given over ambition of Dragon to displace it in future.









# Labuschagne and Smith powering Australia in 2nd Ashes test



**AP ■ LONDON**  
Marnus Labuschagne and Steve Smith hurried Australia to 190-2 against England at the first test in the second Ashes test at Lord's on Wednesday. Australia added 117 runs in the second session for the loss of only David Warner's wicket. The opener scored 66. Labuschagne was 45 not out and Smith on 38. Josh Tongue, in his Ashes debut, became the first England bowler to bowl out Australia's opening batsmen since 1968, and the first at Lord's since 1884. A new concern for England was No. 3 batsman Ollie Pope, who left the field soon after

lunch when he injured his right shoulder while making a diving stop of the ball. England won the toss and made Australia bat on a grassy pitch under cloud cover but then struggled for a breakthrough in ideal bowling conditions. Labuschagne and Smith have an unbeaten 94-run stand in response to sharing a total of 35 runs across four innings in the win at Edgbaston last week. Australia captain Pat Cummins expected a big comeback from his two best batters and Labuschagne and Smith began to deliver, scoring at almost 5 an over on a slow pitch and aging ball. They slowed down before tea with the return of Tongue and the introduction

of Joe Root's part-time spin. Both batters overturned leg before decisions against them. In one over against Stuart Broad, Smith hit consecutive boundaries through the covers to reach 24. On the third ball, he was given out, caught behind. But Smith reviewed immediately and video proved he didn't touch the ball. Labuschagne was struggling until after the drinks break, when he took three boundaries off an over by Broad. Labuschagne was given out lbw to Broad on 33, but the review showed the ball was missing the wickets. When he was on 37, another lbw appeal led by Broad cost England a review when video showed bat

hitting ball. Broad's 13 overs have conceded 48 runs. The only wickets have been taken by Tongue, who has 2-48. Warner resumed after lunch on 53 and got to 66. He'd been beating up Tongue before lunch but Tongue's extra pace finally beat him when one ball nipped in and hit Warner's leg stump. Like his opening partner Usman Khawaja (17), who was also bowled by Tongue, Warner was stunned. Warner, on 1,999 runs in Ashes history, will have to wait until the second innings to become the 18th Australian to reach 2,000. Smith, typically batting air, came in to boogie.



## Protesters briefly disrupt play

**IAN S ■ LONDON**  
A group of protesters from the 'Just Stop Oil' activist group on Wednesday briefly interrupted the proceedings on the first morning of the second Ashes 2023 Test between England and Australia at Lord's. Ahead of the second over of the match, protesters wearing 'Just Stop Oil' t-shirts and holding bags of orange powder, ran onto the ground but neither made it onto the playing strip. The ground staff then arrived to sweep and remove the orange powder paint which had spilled on the outfield. Bairstow, meanwhile, ran to the dressing room to change his white shirt and wicketkeeping gloves, which was made dirty by orange powder paint. In all, play was delayed for nearly six minutes before action resumed. "Cricket is an important



## Indian women's head coach to be picked on June 30

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
India have a tour of Bangladesh scheduled next month and the announcement on the head coach's front will be made before that. "I don't think bringing back Tushar will be a good choice. The team needs someone with fresh ideas. Someone like Amol is the right person to take the team forward." "The management needs to build a big pool of players before the T20 World Cup next year which will also be held in Bangladesh," said a former India player. Ajit Agarkar frontrunner for chief selector's post. After picking the head coach for the women's team on Friday, the CAC is likely to appoint the chief selector for the Indian men's team - a post that has been vacant since Chetan Sharma's unceremonious exit in February. The last date of application is June 30 and the interviews are likely to be held on July 1. "The CAC has the mandate to pick a selector who can stand up to the high profile team management in case there are differences," added the BCCI official. Agarkar was linked to the chief selector's post in the past as well, but this time, he is likely to get the high pressure job. The shortlist for the Indian women team's head coach job includes Amol Muzumdar and Tushar Arothe, who are among those to be interviewed on June 30. While Arothe has coached the Indian team in the past, Muzumdar, who is also in talks to become Baroda coach, has had stints with IPL franchise Rajasthan Royals and the South African national team. It has also been learnt that Englishman and ex-Durham head coach, Jon Lewis has also applied for the job. The Cricket Advisory Committee comprising Ashok Malhotra, Jatin Paranjpe and Sulakshana Naik will conduct the interviews in Mumbai. "The interviews will be conducted on Friday," a BCCI official told PTI. The Harmanpreet Kaur-led India, guilty of throwing away knock out games from winning positions in multi-team events over the past five years, has been without a head coach since Ramesh Powar was sacked in December. Batting coach Hrishikesh Kanitkar was in charge of the team in the T20 World Cup in South Africa earlier this year.

## 'Win ODI WC for Kohli like we did for Tendulkar': Sehwaag

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
Drawing inspiration from its last World Cup triumph, India is looking to win the upcoming tournament for Virat Kohli like the batch of 2011 won it for Sachin Tendulkar, feels former opener Virender Sehwaag. The ICC on Tuesday announced the schedule for the 50-overs World Cup here, which begins on October 5 in Ahmedabad with England and New Zealand playing the opening match, with the world's largest cricket stadium also hosting the final on November 19. Since winning the 2011 World Cup which Kohli was a part of, India have won only one ICC event - the 2013 Champions Trophy - and their wait for lifting a trophy in another global event has now lasted more than a decade. "We played that World Cup for Tendulkar. We won the World Cup, and it was a great exit for Sachin paaji," Sehwaag said during an ICC event to announce the World Cup schedule. "Virat Kohli is (now) in Sachin Tendulkar's shoes. The way he plays, he talks, he looks after the others and the way he



plays cricket with his passion, he is the one now. Everybody is looking to win this World Cup for Virat Kohli," he added. "Virat Kohli is the same now. Everybody will look to win the World Cup for him. He always gives more than 100 per cent. I think Virat Kohli is also looking (forward) to this World Cup. (About) 100,000 people will watch you at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. Virat knows how the pitches will behave. I am sure he will score a lot of runs and he will do his best to win the World Cup for India." With the country hosting the World Cup later this year across 12 venues wherein India will feature in nine different venues alone in the league stage, the expectations will be high for them to go all the way and end their drought. Sehwaag said India are favourites to win their blockbuster clash against Pakistan on October 15 in Ahmedabad because they can handle pressure comparatively better. Sehwaag said, "I feel that now India handles the pressure that is why they win whereas Pakistan have a burden that they haven't won against India. In the 1990s, they were good at deal-

ing with pressure but after 2000, India soak it better. "If any player says that they don't feel pressure, I don't think it's right. We used to say it too but at the end of the day, we know it's an India versus Pakistan game and emotions run high," he said. Sehwaag said players from countries like England and

## Pak not to play Af in World Cup warm-up



**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
with Pakistan will be played at the Narendra Modi Stadium on October 15. Pakistan, who will be looking to win their first ODI World Cup post the 1992 win, will play their first two games against the qualifier teams in Hyderabad on October 6 and October 12 before taking on India. Ahead of the main draw, the teams will also play two warm-up matches to fine-tune their combination. The warm-up matches will be played in Hyderabad, Trivandrum and Guwahati. Pakistan To Play Australia, New Zealand In World Cup 2023 Warm Ups. Pakistan have their warm-up games scheduled against New Zealand and Australia on September 29th and October 3 respectively. Notably, Pakistan had requested the International Cricket Council to not schedule their warm-up matches against Afghanistan and other Asian teams. The board had cited reasons that the team will play the sub-continent teams in the preceding Asia Cup and facing them again will not help them in any way. The ICC accepted PCB's demand and scheduled the matches against New Zealand and Australia. Meanwhile, the Pakistan Cricket Board also requested the ICC to change venues for the games against Australia and Afghanistan. Pakistan are scheduled to take on Afghanistan in Chennai and Australia in Bangalore, however, the Men in Green wanted a swap in venues for the matches but the BCCI and the ICC paid no heed to the demands.

Muttiah Muralitharan said since the World Cup is in the subcontinent, spinners will have a big role to play and agreed with Sehwaag that India, England, Australia and Pakistan could be the favourites for the semifinals. "I am looking forward to the India-England match, that will be a tough match. England is playing really well at the moment. India is one of the favourites in my mind because they are playing at home and they know the conditions really well. They know how to win in India," said Muralitharan, adding that Adil Rashid would be his pick as the most successful bowler in the competition. "The subcontinent teams will be favoured by the wickets, a lot of good spinners are there. Afghanistan's batting is not that great but their spin attack is tremendous. India and Sri Lanka have good spin attacks. "In the subcontinent, I always believe there is a chance of two teams from the subcontinent coming into the finals, with the exception of 1987 when England and Australia came (in the final). Other than that, last time two best teams came into the final and the best team won in 2011," he added.

## Lyon becomes first specialist bowler to play 100-consecutive Test matches

**IAN S ■ LONDON**  
After taking the field for the second Test of Ashes 2023 against England at Lord's, veteran Australian off-spinner Nathan Lyon on Wednesday became the first specialist bowler to play 100 consecutive matches in the longest format of the game. Lyon, who made his Test debut in July 2011, has also become only the sixth player in the history of cricket to feature in 100 consecutive Tests. Other players in the list are Alastair Cook (159), Allan Border (153), Mark Waugh (107), Sunil Gavaskar (106) and Brendon McCullum (101). Coincidentally, Lyon has achieved this rare landmark at Lord's, the same venue where he was dropped in the format for the last time. This was almost a decade ago during Australia's tour of England for the 2013 Ashes series.

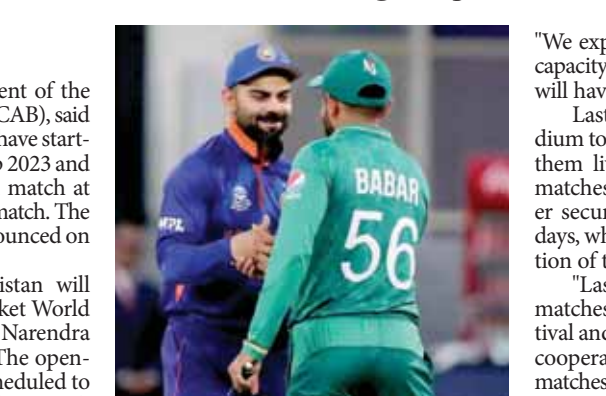


"I've got no hair," Lyon had told cricket.com.au, ahead of his 100th consecutive Test appearance. Lyon also credited former New South Wales Waratahs rugby representative and Australia women's rugby sevens' head of athletic performance Tom Carter for keeping him in prime physical shape through-

out his 12-year Test career, apart from acknowledging support from family and friends. "For any athlete to be successful over a long period of time, you've got to have really good people around you, and I'm not talking within the Australian cricket team. I feel like my family has been absolutely amazing, with their support and love and care," the spinner said. "Then there is Tom Carter, who is arguably one of my best mates but also my PT (personal trainer) who I do a lot of work with behind the scenes. It's probably five days a week when we're at home, and he's a psychologist as well as a fitness trainer because I'm able to vent to him and there's no judgement. We have really good conversations, so it's probably having those really good people around you and I dare say a lot of athletes would feel the same, being able to do it for a long period of time," he added. Australia were pushed into batting first under overcast skies at Lord's by England, who won the toss and elected to bowl first. For Australia, left-arm pacer Mitchell Starc replaced right-arm seamer Scott Boland in the playing while England have brought in pacer Josh Tongue in place of off-spin all-rounder Moeen Ali. Australia are currently leading five-match Ashes series 1-0, after winning the opening match at Edgbaston by two wickets in a thrilling fashion.

## Indo-Pak Semifinal match at Eden Gardens would be a Dream: Ganguly's brother

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
Snehashish Ganguly, the president of the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB), said on Tuesday that the preparations have started for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 and added that an India vs Pakistan match at Eden Gardens would be a dream match. The schedule for CWC 2023 was announced on Tuesday. Arch-rivals India and Pakistan will square off at the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 this October at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. The opening game of the World Cup is scheduled to place at the same venue on October 5 with a match between defending champions England and New Zealand in Ahmedabad, the ICC announced on Tuesday. "Preparations have started. We started preparations after IPL for the World Cup. We are renovating the stadium, corporate boxes. Ground conditions are excellent. Preparations will start from July 1 for the ground. We had a meeting with our curator. Eden Gardens is ready to host the World Cup. There are some patches here and there, within the next two months, we will resolve all those issues," said Ganguly to ANI. On the WC schedule, Ganguly expressed his satisfaction, saying that they got "what we expected, what we wished for." "We tried that we get a semifinal match this time and at the last moment, we got a semifinal match at Eden," he said.



Kolkata will host Qualifier 1 vs Bangladesh on October 28, Pakistan vs Bangladesh on October 31, India vs South Africa on November 5, England vs Pakistan on November 12 and the second semifinal on November 16. "Everyone's first choice will be an India vs Pakistan semifinal at Eden Gardens, it would be a dream match," he added. On the pitch, Ganguly said that the staff will go for a sporting wicket, which offers high-scoring contests and helps both bowlers and batters. "In IPL, everyone enjoyed the match since they were high scoring and the wicket condition was good. We will try maintaining it," he added. Ganguly said that a decision on tickets price will be taken in the next couple of days.

"We expect the crowd to come, we have a capacity of 65,000. Keeping this in mind, we will have a reasonable price," he added. Lastly, he urged fans to come to the stadium to watch the matches or at least enjoy them live on TV. Ganguly said that the matches will be done smoothly with proper security for all during the Durga Puja days, which will take place during the duration of the tournament. "Last time also during international matches, Kolkata police managed this festival and an international match well. They cooperated with us. We are confident that matches will be carried out in a big way, with proper security and safety," he said. Ahmedabad will host the tournament opener as well as the final. The other venues are Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Dharamsala, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai and Pune. Guwahati and Thiruvananthapuram join Hyderabad in hosting the practice matches. Eight teams have qualified for the 46-day event through the Cricket World Cup Super League while the final two spots will be taken by the finalists of the World Cup Qualifier taking place in Zimbabwe. The tournament retains the round-robin format of last time with all teams playing against each other for a total of 45 league matches. The top four teams will qualify for the semi-finals to be played in Mumbai on 15 November and in Kolkata on 16 November. The semi-finals and the final will have reserve days.

