

OPINION 6 DECODING THE SCRIPTS OF 'MANN KI BAAT'

WORLD 9 IMRAN SLAMS GOVT, SAYS NO PLANS TO TRAVEL ABROAD

MONEY 10 SERVICES SECTOR TO DRIVE GDP GROWTH TO 4.9% IN Q4 FY23: ICRA

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY MAY 27, 2023; PAGES 12 & 3

the pioneer

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SINDHU ENTERS MALAYSIA MASTERS SEMIS 11 SPORT



Fight over Sengol escalates

Why does Cong 'hate' Indian culture so much, asks Shah as Cong disputes that 'Sengol' is the symbol of transfer of power by British to India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The war of words between the BJP and the Congress over the historical roots of the ceremonial sceptre Sengol, to be installed near the Chair of the Speaker in the new Parliament building, intensified on Friday.



Rajagopalachari and Jawaharlal Nehru describing the Sengol as a symbol of transfer of power by the British to India.

citizens, including former bureaucrats, ambassadors and veterans condemned the Opposition parties for their decision and claimed that all the "family-first" parties have come together to boycott all that represents India.

1947. BJP president JP Nadda said what connects the boycotting parties is their dynastic leadership whose "monarchic" methods are at loggerheads with the principles of the Constitution.

New Parl will make Indians proud: Modi

PM urges people to share video that gives virtual tour of new Parl

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the new Parliament building will make every Indian proud, as he posted a video of the newly-constructed complex on Twitter and urged people to share it on the social media platform with the hashtag "MyParliamentMyPride".



Speaker Om Birla, former prime minister HD Deve Gowda and Rajya Sabha deputy chairman Harivansh among others are expected to be present during the formal inauguration of the new complex.

CAPSULE

FIVE JUDGES ELEVATED AS HC CHIEF JUSTICES

New Delhi: Five judges were on Friday elevated as chief justices of high courts with one of them due to retire on May 30.

NIA SEEKS DEATH FOR JKLF CHIEF YASIN

New Delhi: The NIA on Friday approached the Delhi High Court seeking death sentence for Kashmiri separatist leader Yasin Malik, who was awarded life term by a trial court in terror funding case.

AIMIM, BJP CLASH OVER 'VANDE MATARAM'

Meerut: A clash erupted between AIMIM and BJP councillors of Meerut Municipal Corporation at oath-taking event organised for them here on Friday. The scuffle began following a disagreement over singing of 'Vande Mataram' to commence the event.

SC grants bail to ailing Jain for six weeks

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday granted jailed former Delhi Minister Satyendar Jain interim bail for six weeks on medical grounds, saying a citizen has a right to receive treatment of his choice in a private hospital at his own expense.

Imperial landmark's tryst with destiny

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The old Parliament building, an architectural splendour and a historic landmark that guided the destiny of India for nearly a century and whose illustrious legacy will now be consigned to the pages of history, was inaugurated on January 18, 1927, by then Viceroy Lord Irwin.



Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt in a bid to attain freedom. The building has seen the dawn of Independence and its halls have reverberated with the historic "Tryst with Destiny" speech delivered by first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru on August 15, 1947.

was being built at a site in Raisina Hill area. According to archival documents and rare old images, a grand ceremony was held on January 18, 1927, to mark the opening of the majestic building, then called Council House.

The building, with a diameter of 560 ft and circumference of one-third of a mile, was designed by Sir Herbert Baker, who along with Sir Edwin Lutyens was chosen to design the new imperial capital in Delhi.

Now HC to hear all petitions on Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah masjid dispute

PTI ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Allahabad High Court on Friday directed all matters related to the Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute pending before a Mathura court be transferred to it. Justice Arvind Kumar Mishra passed the order allowing a transfer application filed by Bhagwan Shrikrishna Virajman at Katra Keshav Dev Khawat Mathura through the next friend, Ranjana Agnihotri, and seven others.

India set for exponential growth, says WEF prez

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India is expected to clock the highest growth among the world's big economies this year and the country's economy is witnessing the "famous snowball effect" that will lead to more investments and more jobs, according to World Economic Forum (WEF) President Borge Brende.



will see a situation where more poverty is eradicated and more opportunities are there for young people," Brende told PTI in an interview in the national capital.

Rahul gets court NOC for passport, but for just 3 yrs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Friday granted a no-objection certificate (NOC) to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for issuance of an "ordinary passport" for three years instead of the normal 10 years, following an objection raised by BJP leader Subramanian Swamy.

Special ₹75 coin to mark opening of new Parliament

New Delhi: The Government will issue a commemorative ₹75 coin to mark the inauguration of new Parliament Building on May 28 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

As per a gazette notification by Department of Economic Affairs under the finance ministry, the weight of this coin could be 34.65- 35.35 gram.

Should be limit to politics: EAM on Opp boycott

Rajppla: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday described as "unfortunate" the decision by 20 Opposition parties to boycott the inauguration of the new Parliament building and said there should be a limit to doing politics.

Impressive building: Omar

Srinagar: National Conference leader Omar Abdullah on Friday said the new Parliament building was a welcome addition and looks "pretty damn impressive", amid criticism by the Opposition over its inauguration.

member of the Lok Sabha, many of his colleagues often spoke about the need for a new and improved Parliament building.

El Nino return predicted after 3-yr break

Normal monsoon from June-Sept this year: IMD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday retained its forecast for "normal" monsoon from June-September this year, unchanged from its prediction in April, except north west region this year although it is said there is a high probability of El Nino phenomenon which is set to return after a three-year hiatus.



Announcing the so-called stage-2 long range forecast for Southwest Monsoon 2023, the IMD in its updates on Friday said rainfall during the June-September period is expected to be below normal at <92 per cent of long period average (LPA) in northwest India with an error margin of +/-4 per cent while overall monsoon is expected to be normal in the

country at 96 to 104 per cent of the LPA, which is based on rainfall data from 1971 to 2020. It is likely to be normal at 94 to 106 per cent of the LPA in the northeast, central, and south Peninsular.

Karnataka and northern Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Ladakh, it said.

The IMD said the warming of the equatorial Pacific Ocean has begun and there was a 90 per cent probability of development of the El Nino phenomenon, which is known to affect monsoon rains in India.

School jobs scam: SC stays ₹25 lakh cost on Abhishek, but allows probe

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday stayed the Calcutta High Court order, which imposed a cost of ₹25 lakh on Trinamool Congress leader Abhishek Banerjee while dismissing his plea seeking recall of a previous order pertaining to probe into the school jobs scam case.

A vacation bench comprising Justices JK Maheshwari and PS Narasimha observed the high court had considered the points raised by Banerjee in his plea but the imposition of cost of ₹25 lakh was "perhaps not warranted."

UN favours memorial wall for Indian peacekeepers

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/ UNITED NATIONS

Given India's contribution to various peacekeeping missions under the aegis of the United Nations, top UN officials have voiced support for New Delhi's initiative to establish a memorial wall honouring the fallen UN peacekeepers.



About 177 Indian peacekeepers have made the supreme sacrifice, the highest number by far from any troop-contributing country.

a ceremony in the General Assembly Hall at which the Dag Hammarskjöld Medals were awarded posthumously to 103 military, police, and civilian peacekeepers, who were killed in the line of duty last year, including three Indian personnel.







ROW IN WB OVER NEW MOVIE 'THE DIARY OF WEST BENGAL'

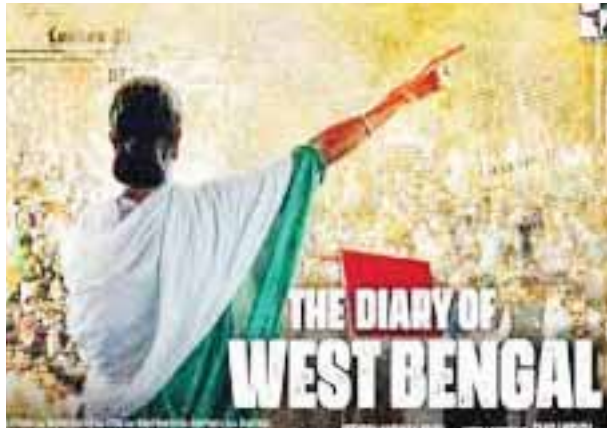
BJP slams TMC for police action 'State Govt is trying to control free speech'

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The dust raised by 'The Kerala Story' had hardly settled down when a new controversy erupted in Bengal, this time over a new film, 'The Diary of West Bengal'.

The BJP has strongly criticized the Trinamool Congress Government for the Kolkata Police action of serving a notice to the film's director Sanoj Mishra.

Criticising the State Government for trying to control free speech, BJP national vice-president Dilip Ghosh on Friday said that the ruling outfit was 'afraid of everything and the notice served on the film's-



director is a mark of that fear.' He said, 'I have no idea of the facts and neither do I know

to be afraid of.' Alleging that in its fear of losing power the TMC Government was trying to control free speech, Ghosh said, 'The Government cannot suppress the fundamental right of people... everyone has a right to express and in case of films there is censor board and similar regulating authorities... So I do not understand how the police came into the picture... why have the police serve notice on film directors.'

He recalled how the State Government had 'received a rap on its knuckles from the Supreme Court after banning 'The Kerala Story' in Bengal.'

Acting on an alleged complaint — based apparently on the trailer of the film — lodged by an individual the Amherst Street Police Station had earlier issued notice of appearance to Sanoj Mishra the director of the film.

The director however, on Friday made it clear that he had no intention to bring Bengal to disrepute. Speaking about the notice allegedly served on his reported act of trying to defame the State Mishra on Friday 'my intention is not to malign the image of the State. We have shown only facts in the film which are well-researched.'

Meanwhile, though the TMC would not react officially to the controversy, a senior leader from North Kolkata of which Amherst Street Police Station is a part said, 'the single-point agenda of the BJP is to provoke communal divide and tension in the country by getting its agents to write books or produce communally angled films.'

Centre turns down Bengal's request to let anybody, except CM, attend Niti Aayog meet

It's a ploy to keep aside Bengal's demands of fund release, says TMC

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

There were fresh rounds of tensions between the Bengal Government and the Centre with New Delhi turning down the request of the State Government to let State Finance Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya and the Chief Secretary to attend the Saturday's Niti Ayog meeting in place of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Speaking about the latest development Bhattacharya on Friday said, 'we had requested the Centre to allow me and the Chief Secretary to attend the meeting as Mamata Banerjee is busy with some other work. In its reply, the Centre said the 'CM may attend'. This is an

indirect way of not allowing anybody other than the CM to attend the meeting. Hence, there will be no representative of West Bengal at tomorrow's meeting.'

Explaining the State Government's position Bhattacharya further said, 'If the Chief Minister of the State is preoccupied with some other work, can't she send any Minister or official on her behalf? After all, I am the Finance Minister of the State and can represent the State.' The meeting is likely to be chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Bhattacharya said refusing to let the State's representatives to attend the meeting was a 'ploy' of the Centre not to hear Bengal's demands for the release of funds that it had allegedly withheld.

The BJP leadership however has claimed that the Centre has stopped the funds because the State has failed to account for the earlier grants.

Virtual workshop on 'Misuse of Internet' held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in cooperation with the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) jointly with its outlying training unit, the Central Detective Training Institute (CDTI) of the Ministry of Home Affairs, organised a virtual workshop on the 'Misuse of Internet' on May 25-26.

The workshop was held under the framework of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA).

The virtual workshop was addressed by Muanpui Saiawi, Joint Secretary (D&ISA) in the Ministry of External Affairs, Neeraj Sinha, Additional Director General, BPR&D and Anurag Kumar, Director, BPR&D, the MEA said here on Friday.

Cambodian King to visit India on May 30

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

King of Cambodia Norodom Sihamoni will pay a state visit to India on May 30 and will meet President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The President will hold a banquet in honour of the King. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will call on the King.

The King is visiting India nearly six decades after his father Norodom Sihanouk's visit. It is pertinent to note that the King's state visit will coincide with the culmination of the 70th anniversary of the diplomatic ties between New Delhi and Phnom Penh.

The Cambodian King will arrive here in New Delhi for a two-day (May 29-31) official tour whereby he will be accompanied by a 27-member high-level official delegation, the Ministry of External Affairs(MEA) announced here on Friday.

Progress on cutting plastic pollution slow, stakeholders not well integrated: Scientists

PTI ■ PANAJI

The progress in reducing plastic pollution across the globe has been painfully slow and the consequent damage to the natural environment and to human health is likely to increase further, according to a network of scientists researching on the subject.

In a research paper published in the scientific journal 'Nature Communications', scientists from many countries, including India, have said that the views and ways of working of four distinct stakeholder communities — scientists, industry, society at large and those making policy and legislation — are 'not sufficiently

well integrated'. The paper has been jointly published by Richard S Lampitt, Stephen Fletcher, Matthew Cole, Alice Kloker, Stefan Krause, Fran O'Hara, Peter Ryde, Mahua Saha, Anastasia Voronkova and Adrian Whyte from the UK, France and India.

Mahua Saha, a scientist from Goa-based CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography, is the only Asian scientist who is representing the region in this group.

The researchers claim that about 400 million tonnes of plastic waste is generated every year, and this quantity is expected to increase dramatically over the coming decades.

GAGANYAAN MISSION

Navy, ISRO release recovery training plan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to ensure synergy for the Gaganyaan mission, the Indian Navy and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) have released the Gaganyaan Recovery Training Plan at INS Garuda in Kochi, officials here said on Friday. The document outlines the training plan for recovery of the crew module of the Gaganyaan mission.

The training document was jointly released on Wednesday by Vice Admiral Atul Anand, Director General of Naval Operations; Unnikrishnan Nair, Director, Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, (VSSC) and Umamaheshwaran R, Director, Human Space Flight Centre of ISRO, the navy officials said.

The document defines overall requirements with respect to training of various teams participating in recovery operations including divers, MARCOs (marine commandos), medical specialists, communicators, technicians and naval aviators, a senior official



said.

The recovery training is planned in incremental phases starting from unmanned recovery to manned recovery training in harbour and open sea conditions. The recovery operations are being led by the Indian Navy in co-ordination with other government agencies, the officials said.

The Crew Module Recovery Model was also formally handed over to the Indian Navy at its state-of-the-art Water Survival Training Facility (WSTF) at INS Garuda, Kochi. The mass and shape simulated mock-up will be used for familiarisation and training of Gaganyaan recovery teams, they said.

The Navy will also assist the ISRO by undertaking a series of trials to fine tune the standard operating procedures for training the crew and recovery teams of Gaganyaan.

Meet to ensure India's rights under Indus water treaty held in J&K

PNS ■ JAMMU

Deputy National Security Advisor Vikram Misri Friday reviewed the progress of various hydro-power projects in Jammu and Kashmir while chairing the second meeting of the task force to ensure exercise of India's rights under the Indus Water Treaty.

The Deputy National Security Advisor also met top military and security officials in the union territory and was briefed on the prevailing situation in the Kashmir valley.

'It was noted that progress had been made on several fronts and emphasis laid on completing the works on all the Indus Basin Projects in timely manner to enable better utilisation of India's rights under the Indus Water Treaty,' the statement from the government-run Jammu and Kashmir State Power Development Corporation said.

Misri also called on Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha and apprised him of the efforts to monitor implementation of hydro power projects in Indus Basin under the directions of the Prime Minister's Office.

The meeting on the Indus Water Treaty was attended by officials from the ministries of external affairs, Jal Shakti, Jammu and Kashmir administration among others.

MSTC Limited advertisement for e-Auctions Programme. Details include location, contact info, and a list of items for auction such as converters, batteries, and scrap.

NOTICE from Alshifa Multispeciality Hospital regarding IPD records files and a request to contact a medical records officer.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE from ICICI Bank regarding the reconstruction of financial assets and enforcement of security interest.

Advertisement for Nagarnigam Nagar Palika, Raigarh (Chh.G.). Includes contact details and information about a public hearing for a project.

K'taka Cong on mission to repeat victory in 2024 polls

Dy CM who is KPCC chief too focused on bagging all 28 seats in LS polls

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ BANGALORE

Though the cacophony of electioneering and victory parades have come to an end with the high-decibel swearing in of Siddaramiah as Chief Minister and D K Shivakumar as his deputy, the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee continues to be in a mission mode. Though the Lok Sabha election is expected only in the months of March-April 2024, it has not deterred Shivakumar, who holds the additional post of KPCC president, from his hectic schedule. He is on a mission to make a clean sweep of all the 28 seats at stake in the State to establish his command over the party.

The report going round Karnataka is that Shivakumar would be elevated as the Chief Minister after 30 months of rule by Siddaramiah. This is the formula which has been worked out by the Congress High Command to placate Shivakumar who was the frontrunner along with Siddaramiah for the post of



chief minister.

Both Shivakumar and Siddaramiah refuse to tell anything about the arrangement though minister M B Patil courted controversy on Wednesday by blatantly ruling out any change of leadership for the next five years.

Shivakumar has been asked to lead the Congress till the Lok Sabha election and this is being seen as the confidence he enjoys with the High Command. The fact that he has not lowered the guards is proof of his single point pursuit to win Karnataka and hand it over to the national leadership. Sources close to Shivakumar told The Pioneer that the war room in his office in the Pradesh Congress Committee Office is functional round the clock as his close aides are filtering and analyzing the shortcomings faced during the assembly poll. Shivakumar is personally overseeing the records of past Lok Sabha polls and method of voting in the constituencies.

Cabinet expansion at noon today, portfolios to be allotted by evening

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Minister K H Muniyappa on Friday said the Cabinet expansion will take place on Saturday afternoon and the portfolios would also be allotted by evening.

Muniyappa also said barring four or five ministerial posts, rest would be filled up in the same day.

According to the Minister, the Cabinet would be a mix of seniors and young people.

'Tomorrow, the Cabinet expansion will take place. Time has also been fixed. It would be tomorrow afternoon. Most of the posts would be filled,' Muniyappa told reporters after returning from New Delhi.

To a question on how many ministerial posts would be filled, he said, 'Barring four or five, rest all would be filled up.'

When asked whether senior leaders have put up any demand before the party high command regarding ministerial positions, Muniyappa said at t it would be difficult to say anything.

Over 73% women want menstrual leave: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Menstrual Hygiene Day on May 28, a survey has said that around 73 per cent of women want companies to allow them to take menstrual leave while 86.6 per cent are in favour of a menstrual-friendly workplace where hygiene methods and support infrastructure are available to women. The Menstrual Hygiene Survey 2023, conducted by Everette, a feminine hygiene brand, also pointed out that 71.7 per cent of the participants in the survey do not want the menstrual leaves to be paid, fearing that it may make companies reluctant to hire female employees. Nearly 10,000 women in the age group of 18 to 35 years participated in the survey that was conducted in multiple cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Chennai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Lucknow and Patna.

'While 73 per cent of women want that

companies should allow them to take menstrual leaves, 71.7 per cent of them do not want these to be paid and fear that it may make companies reluctant to hire female employees.

'Also, 86.6 per cent of women are in favour of the concept of a menstrual friendly workplace where females are not hesitant in discussing the subject openly, and menstrual hygiene methods and support infrastructure is made available to women. Besides, 68.9 per cent of women have taken a leave of absence from work during menstrual periods,' the survey stated.

The survey recommended that corporates need to make it a priority to adopt practices for a menstrual-friendly workplace. Researchers from the UVA School of Medicine, Flo Health, University College London, Technische Universitaet Berlin and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine too found menstrual symptoms hurt workplace productivity of many women.

E-Procurement Tender Notice for Bhalai Municipal Corporation. Includes details about the tender process, contact information, and a table of tender items.

BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi TENDER NOTICE. Details about sealed tenders for various power supply and civil work contracts.





## FIRST COLUMN

FAITH AS INTERACTION,  
NOT AS KNOWLEDGE

We must approach God by exercising our free will, which can be done in multiple ways



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Yes, it is not a matter of knowledge. With the advent of the internet, who is not aware of God? But how many pursue this knowledge? Very few to say the least. Why? Because faith comes from interaction with God. We approach God and He responds, otherwise this relationship is a non-starter. A simple example will help. I don't have any interaction with a particular resident of my neighbourhood. There will be no progress in my relationship with that person. Yes, we must get in touch with God, who limits himself to instruct us through bonafide scriptures, preachers, who have a wide following, etc. We must approach God by exercising our free will. And we can do so in multiple ways like praying to God, going to a temple, chanting God's name, etc. Every such act is taken notice of by God, who responds appropriately.

To bring clarity to this phenomenon, I will narrate my experience in this connection. The very first thing God notices is our dutifulness. We, human beings, have been given the responsibility of doing our duties according to time, place and circumstances. This is how the creation can go on. Lord Krishna warns that even maintenance of the body will not be possible through inaction. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 3.8) God gets interested in those who are dutiful. The next thing, which impresses God is obeying dharma. After all, dharma is the bedrock on which the creation rests. God even incarnates to re-establish dharma. (4.8) Now such persons are keenly watched because such people become good people. The mode of goodness in them becomes predominant by overpowering the other two modes of passion and darkness. (14.10) If such a person requests help, God is prepared to do so; one just has to sincerely pray for it.



We normally seek help from God in two ways. One is to get out of some trouble and the other is to gain something material like a decent job. What is God's response? Let us understand one simple rule: God is always just; He couldn't be favouring someone at the cost of another, as will be in the case of landing a job. However, God can be more generous in case of helping someone to recover from a major illness. In this case, also, God has to determine if the sick person deserves such a favour and how much. But all said and done, God does respond. How much and when is decided by God, as found appropriate by Him. No request for help is ignored; only the quantum and the quality are to be decided.

In one matter, God is more forthcoming, i.e. to guide. If a person is sincerely seeking guidance to do something noble, God will be very keen to help, because being the owner of everything, He must encourage what suits the creation. Don't we need good people to keep all of us going? God gives the right intelligence, as in the case of medical scientists. If someone is genuinely looking for a medical solution, which can help millions, and the motive is not to encash it to the fullest extent, God will help. What do you think we will do if we were to decide? God gives me spiritual solutions to common problems about which I can write. One may call it realisation as it really helps me personally. What more than any other favour reinforces faith is peace, which we all know is sought by everyone, but only a few manage it.

The conclusion is to approach God in ways, which please Him, about which He has given detailed instructions. Swami Ravi Das was a leatherworker. He had no formal education, but he became a great devotee of God. Knowledge is helpful only as a tool, even spiritual; it must be practised. Spiritual activities take us to a higher level. Therefore, let us get going and link with the owner of the creation. He is waiting and He has plenty to give.

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US must undertake a  
midcourse correction

K A BADARINATH

Even if the US revises its debt ceiling of \$31.4 trillion, its risk-ridden economy may precipitate a global crisis of a larger magnitude



With the looming debt crisis in the United States with the potential to default, a showdown between Republicans that control the House and the democratic white house may not augur well for the global economy and developing countries like India. Owing unsustainable economic policies over a few decades and irresponsible handling of resources has led the largest global economic powerhouse into a big mess of its own making. Even if president Joe Biden manages to clinch a last-minute deal with Republican top leadership to push up the debt ceiling beyond us \$ 31.4 trillion, larger questions continue to haunt the Americans. Mobilizing loans through US bonds or debt paper may not be the immediate concern but potential default on June 1 is what may turn catastrophic to not only Americans but the entire world. For Americans, it means that democrats will not be able to fund their fancied social security payments on medical and health insurance, pension or social development projects.

President Biden and his Democratic administration will have to put on hold all fancy projects like waiving student loans or fees to provide personal tax concessions to youngsters and new taxpayers democrats understand the full importance of lifting the already unsustainable debt limit of \$ 31.4 trillion. In fact, this also explains US President Biden's decision to forgo the scheduled quad summit in Australia and head back home after the G-7 leaders meeting in Hiroshima. Eventually, the quad summit had to be called off with heads of the US,



THERE IS EVERY POSSIBILITY OF US MOVING INTO ECONOMIC RECESSION, THEREBY STYMIEING DEMAND FOR GOODS AND SERVICES GLOBALLY

(The author is the director and chief executive of this non-partisan think tank based in New Delhi)

Australia, Japan and India meeting briefly at Hiroshima on the sidelines of the G-7 congregation. The larger issue that confronts us and the world is a wee bit different and difficult.

There is every possibility of us moving into economic recession thereby stymieing demand for goods and services globally. This will hit the economic growth sentiment internationally big time. Secondly, the possibility of banks getting stuck with worthless dollar-denominated bonds or debt paper in the medium term cannot be ruled out unless both the federal reserve and political leadership in the US take recourse to the mid-course correction that involves massive spending cuts or improve the country's revenues. Such a policy may be very unattractive for Democratic voters when they have to elect their president in 2024.

Thirdly, containing the contagion effect of the US economy moving into the abyss will be a herculean task. One cannot easily forget the global financial crisis triggered by real estate-linked mortgages that turned worthless in 2007-08. This housing bubble stirred a perfect storm to impact both large developing countries like India as well as least developed countries alike. Excessive risk exposure taken by banks was the biggest element in this crisis of the worst kind after the great depression of 1929.

Fourthly, if the US default finally happens, then countries like India having huge exposure to American greenback will also face the heat.

But, this diversification should go the whole hog and consciously lead to pursuing the de-dollarization of the Indian economy as a state policy. Fifthly, while exports to the US become attractive and import bills get squeezed, a demand slump globally will negate the advantages gained in trade deals. There is no reason why India should not pursue a more independent trade and currency policy keeping herself at a safe distance from the federal reserve and recalibrating her linkages with Washington DC. Sixthly, Democrats and Republicans must work towards mid-course correction on the economic and development front rather than recklessly going for borrowing more from Tom to pay Peter.

Limiting the fresh debt limit to us \$ 1.5 trillion till March 31, 2024, and achieving concomitant cuts in spending by us \$ 1.47 trillion would save the perilously placed our economy. Seventhly, precipitating a perfectly cooked crisis is not in anyone's interest and hence reining in the fresh spending to less than one per cent as per the limit, save, grow act of 2023 makes eminent sense. On the parallel, limiting the mop-up of fresh debt and gradual reduc-

tion in existing debt stock would augur well for the US economy that's seeking to reposition itself and instil confidence in its trading and investment partners.

The debt-to-GDP ratio was approximately 97 per cent at the end of FY 2022, and under current policy and based on this report's assumptions is projected to reach 566 per cent in 2097, it pointed out. While pursuing a revised economic policy dispensation, president Biden should not easily forget the 2011 crisis that was triggered by our congress. This pushed up the borrowing costs for the treasury by a humongous us \$ 1.3 billion in just one year. Also, we should not provide any leverage to China for encashing its crisis. China is easily the largest holder of us debt paper, notes and long-term bonds with valuations ranging from \$ 859.4 billion to \$ one trillion.

China may like to leverage our debt paper to rebalance its own resources position which again may not be looking too good. China's own debt of us \$ 14.34 trillion as of April 12, 2023, and swelling at a whopping \$ 3.81 trillion annually may not be something to brag about by president Xi's oligarchs driven communist party. Potential defaults in us, and machinations in China have valuable lessons for India that are overtly conservative on borrowings, especially by the Narendra Modi government.

## The tragedy for workers in today's 'gig' economy

All temporary, freelance and contract workers must be properly defined and identified to ensure minimum wages, maximum working hours and social security

You see many youths around you, who deliver the goods coming via e-commerce apps and websites. Similarly, millions of drivers all over the world provide app-based taxi services. E-commerce and technology-driven businesses have become a major part of the economy these days. This section of the economy is known as the 'gig economy' and the people working there are called 'gig' workers. Recently, the delivery workers of an e-commerce company named 'Blinkit' went on a one-day strike, which was also given a lot of importance by the media. The case was that a company called 'Blinkit', which claims to supply consumers with their grocery requirements in 10 minutes to half an hour, had reduced the



ASHWANI MAHAJAN

payment to its delivery agents by half. Significantly, before this change, the company used to pay Rs 25 to the delivery agent for each delivery. Till about a year ago, the delivery agents were given Rs 50 per delivery. Delivery workers' complaint is that fuel costs have skyrocketed during this period, but their wages have shrunk to a quarter.

The reality is that today youth in big and small cities are forced to work as delivery agents in the absence of any decent employment. In the initial phase, these workers also used to earn sufficiently, but due to low payouts, now their economic condition has become very pathetic. The reality is that in the absence of alternative employment, it has become almost a compulsion

for the youth to work as delivery agents.

On the other hand, companies like 'Ola' and 'Uber' providing app-based taxi services have also started charging highly exploitative commissions from taxi drivers. Due to this, the drivers of 'Ola' and 'Uber' have also resorted to agitational means like strikes many times. But the exploitative commission policy of 'Ola' and 'Uber' continues unabated. Despite the strike by Blinkit's delivery agents, no solution is in sight.

Gig workers like drivers of 'Ola', 'And Uber', delivery agents of 'Blinkit', 'Zomato', 'And Swiggy' etc. or any other type of workers registered with any other app-based service provider, whose employment depends on the mercy of

these app companies, businesses or whose livelihood depends on the delivery of goods or ordering of services based on messages received from these apps, are today suffering from the exploitation by these companies.

Nowadays the word gig is very much in vogue. Till two-three decades ago, the word gig was not much in use. It has become necessary to understand the meaning of the word 'gig' and the terms such as 'gig economy' and 'gig worker' etc. and their effects on society.

A few decades back, there were only two types of workers. One, the salaried employees and the other, the casual workers. Salaried workers are generally employed on a permanent basis with a fixed salary and other facilities. A

certain procedure has to be followed for the removal of these workers from employment. On the other hand, casual labour means daily wage workers. These labourers are paid wages on a daily basis and have to go in search of employment every day.

In the organized sector, earlier most workers were generally employed on a permanent or regular basis and their employment was also fairly secure. In the unorganized sector like agriculture, construction and sometimes in manufacturing, the practice of daily wage labourers is seen. Generally, educated and trained workers were mostly salaried workers and most of the daily wage labourers used to be uneducated and untrained workers. But these days even

organised sector employers have found an easy way to employ gig workers or sometimes on contract or on fixed term; where workers lack job security and social security. Further, there is the absence of regulations like working hours and working conditions, as these workers in order to earn sufficiently have to work for longer hours and under precarious conditions.

This new class of labour, namely, gig labour is the outcome of the emerging gig economy, based on new technology. This new category has emerged in the form of online platforms, cloud working, freelancing, e-commerce, supply chain, etc. That is, it can be said that new technology and new business models are the creators of this new labour class.

These workers who are serving based on work/order provided by the apps are clearly working under the instructions of the apps owned by e-commerce companies, but in government definitions, they are not considered workers, they are called 'freelancers'.

All such gig, temporary, and contract workers will have to be properly defined and identified while ensuring minimum wages, maximum working hours and various types of social security for them. If this does not happen, this system will be called nothing more than Jungle Raj, whose rule is 'survival of the fittest'. The Government of India is expected to make policies for the social security of the workers of these online platforms i.e., gig workers.









# DJOKOVIC EYES HISTORY AT FRENCH OPEN



**AP ■ PARIS**  
Novak Djokovic will bid for a record-breaking 23rd Grand Slam title at a French Open without his old rival Rafael Nadal for the first time since 2004, while Iga Swiatek attempts to become the first woman to defend the title in 16 years.

Carlos Alcaraz won the Barcelona and Madrid Opens en route to taking over from Djokovic as world number one, while Daniil Medvedev is seeded second for Roland Garros after his maiden clay triumph in Rome. But Djokovic will know this is a massive opportunity to break out of his tie with 14-time French Open winner Nadal at the top of the all-time list of most men's Slam singles titles. The two-time champion has lost eight of his 10 French Open meetings with Nadal who

is missing this year's edition due to a hip injury he suffered at the Australian Open. "I know I can always play better," Djokovic said after losing to Holger Rune in the Italian Open last night. "Definitely am looking forward to working on various aspects of my game, of my body, hopefully getting myself in 100 percent shape. That's the goal." Djokovic and Alcaraz are seeded to meet in the semi-finals after being placed in the same half of the draw. The 36-year-old may also

have to get past Monte Carlo Masters champion Andrey Rublev in the quarters. The other side of the draw appears wide open, with in-form Medvedev the highest seed despite never having previously got past the quarter-finals on the Paris clay. The Russian lost in the first round on each of his first four visits before making the quarters in 2021. "I would never (have) thought I would be able to make this (win a clay-court title)," Medvedev said after beating Rune in the Rome final.

"But I have to be honest — a Grand Slam is always bigger." In-form youngster Rune, who made a surprise run to last year's quarter-finals, could face Casper Ruud in the last eight in a rematch of a bad-tempered meeting 12 months ago. Ruud went on to be thrashed in the final by Nadal and also lost the US Open showpiece match to Alcaraz. But the Norwegian world number four has struggled for form this year, only reaching the quarters in two of the 10 tournaments he has played.

## Sabalenka faces no Ukraine handshake at French Open

**AP ■ PARIS**  
Aryna Sabalenka on Friday said that "it's OK if she hates me" as the Belarusian star braced to face Ukraine rival Marta Kostyuk in a highly-charged French Open showdown. World number two Sabalenka knows that Kostyuk, an outspoken critic of tennis authorities over their handling of players from Russia and their Belarusian allies in the aftermath of the invasion of Ukraine, will refuse to shake hands after their first round match at Roland Garros. "If she hates me, OK. I can't do anything about that," said 25-year-old Sabalenka. "There are going to be people who love me; there are going to be people who hate me. If she hates me, I don't feel anything like that to her."



Kostyuk refused to shake hands with Belarus's two-time Grand Slam title winner and former world number one Victoria Azarenka at last year's US Open in New York. They agreed to touch racquets instead at the net at the end of the match. "If I could I would stop the

war," said Australian Open champion Sabalenka. "And about the no shaking. I can kind of understand them. Like I imagine if they're going to shake hands with Russians and Belarusians, then they're gonna get so many messages from their home countries. "So I kind of understand why they are not doing it. At the same time, I feel like sports shouldn't be in politics. Like we're just athletes. If they feel good with no shaking hands, I'm happy with that." Sabalenka defeated Kostyuk in Dubai in February 2022, just one week before Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine. Last week in Rome, Ukraine's Anhelina Kalinina refused to shake hands with Veronika Kudermetova after beating the Russian in the semi-final.

## Man Utd thrash Chelsea to secure Champions League return

**AP ■ MANCHESTER**  
Erik ten Hag said Manchester United are back where they belong after a 4-1 thrashing of Chelsea on Thursday secured a return to the Champions League next season. Casemiro, Anthony Martial, Bruno Fernandes and Marcus Rashford were on target as the Red Devils moved up to third in the Premier League. A miserable night summed up Chelsea's season despite spending over £500 million (\$620 million) in the transfer market as they slumped to an eighth defeat in 10 games since Frank Lampard returned as interim manager. By contrast, confirmation of a top-four finish rounds off a successful first season in charge for Ten Hag after also ending United's six-year trophy drought by winning the League Cup in February. More silverware could be to come next month should United halt Manchester City's charge towards the treble in the FA Cup final. But a return to Europe's elite competition next season was one of Ten Hag's primary aims when he took the reins after a disastrous 2021/22 campaign when United finished sixth. "I think (it is) a successful season but the season is not finished," said Ten Hag. "This club belongs in the Champions League, but this league is very strong, with many clubs competing for this position. "It is the main objective of the sea-

son to get into the Champions League. The competition is tough, many teams with really good squads, good managers, so you are doing a good job (to qualify). For this moment it is the maximum but we want more (next season)." Casemiro's arrival from Real Madrid has been fundamental to United's revival.

The 31-year-old's class and experience shone through against a youthful Chelsea side that were punished for a lack of efficiency in both boxes. "It was another reality day today when you look at the emphatic nature at the top end of the pitch of United compared to us," said Lampard. "Results for

Chelsea this season are not good enough." Mykhailo Mudryk should have netted his first Chelsea goal when the Ukrainian sliced wide a glorious chance on five minutes. Just 60 seconds later, the visitors trailed as Casemiro was afforded a free header to turn home Christian Eriksen's free-kick. A positive night for United was blighted by an injury to winger Antony, who was forced off on a stretcher with an ankle injury that will make him a major doubt for the FA Cup final in 10 days' time. But the home side ended the game as a contest in first-half stoppage time when Casemiro's no-look pass opened up the Chelsea defence for Jadon Sancho to square for Martial. Ten Hag's men should have had more goals to round off a fine night in the second period as Fernandes smashed against the bar and Eriksen somehow failed to turn in Tyrell Malacia's cross from point-blank range. Fernandes did finally get his goal from the penalty spot after the Portuguese midfielder was brought down by Wesley Fofana. More calamitous Chelsea defending invited Rashford to become the first United player in a decade to score 30 goals in a season. Fernandes pounced on Fofana's loose pass and teed up the England international, who needed two attempts to beat Kepa Arrizabalaga.

Real still without Vinicius for Sevilla trip: Ancelotti

## Real still without Vinicius for Sevilla trip: Ancelotti

**AP ■ MADRID**  
Vinicius Junior subjected to racial abuse last weekend will miss a second successive match due to a knee problem Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said on Friday. The 22-year-old Brazilian winger has received worldwide support since being racially abused by Valencia fans last Sunday. Vinicius did not play against Rayo Vallecano in Madrid's midweek win because of some knee discomfort, but was present as his team-mates showed him their support by wearing his number 20 shirt before the game. He has failed to shake off the problem for Saturday's away match with Europa League finalists Sevilla. "Vinicius will not travel because he will not play, he'd go if he had the chance of playing (but) his knee is still giving him problems," Ancelotti told a news conference on Friday. "It doesn't matter if it's home or away, he can't play. I



hope that he can play in the last game." Ancelotti said Madrid were also without Karim Benzema and Marco Asensio with other injury issues. Los Blancos are second in the table, a point ahead of city rivals Atletico. Sevilla, 10th, still have a chance of qualifying for next season's UEFA Conference League, sitting just a point behind Osasuna in seventh.

## Klopp optimistic for future despite Liverpool's disappointing season

**AP ■ LIVERPOOL**  
Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp says he has "lots of reasons" for optimism despite the crushing disappointment of missing out on Champions League qualification. Klopp, whose team are guaranteed to finish fifth, told his pre-match press conference on Friday he had expected United and Newcastle to get the points they needed this week after Liverpool's 1-1 draw against Aston Villa. It means Liverpool, who narrowly missed out on a historic quadruple last year, have failed to qualify for the competition after featuring for six straight seasons. "For a long time it was clear this will not be a historically good season," said Klopp. "I think I said everything about it, that we are absolutely not happy with it, that we made mistakes, that we couldn't deliver, ultimately we weren't consistent enough." But he said Liverpool's late-season form, including a seven-match winning run in the league, had been impressive. "If we could have done that over the whole season we would be in a different place," said the German.



"Of course there are reasons for optimistic views because of the things we showed in the last few weeks. That's definitely the case. "We have other reasons for an optimistic view because of the

## 'Nervous' Klopp hopes for 'massive' Dortmund title win

**AP ■ LIVERPOOL**  
Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp admitted on Friday to being "a bit nervous" ahead of his former side Borussia Dortmund's title-deciding match on Saturday. Currently two points clear of second-placed Bayern Munich at the top of the Bundesliga, Dortmund will lift the title if they win at home against Mainz. Dortmund have not won the title since 2011-12, when Klopp was in the Westfalen Stadium dugout. Asked if he was following the title race in Germany, Klopp told reporters in Liverpool "yes, I'm not dead, I'm alive." "I'm a bit nervous to be honest" the 55-year-old German admitted, saying there

were "ups and downs, (but) it looks like they can do it." Dortmund can still lift the title without a victory on Saturday, provided they equal or better Bayern's result away at Cologne, with all games kicking off at the same time. Bayern have won the last ten German titles since Klopp took Dortmund to the championship and the manager said he hoped for change at the top. "I can imagine Bayern see it differently but it's not fun if the same team always becomes the champion and we all know Bayern will strike back next year anyway. "Nobody thinks they have done it already. It's a big one and I just hope they will get through it. It will be massive."

## Sindhu, Prannoy in Malaysia Masters semis, Srikanth out



**PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR**  
Star Indian shuttlers PV Sindhu and HS Prannoy advanced to the women's and men's singles semifinals of the Malaysia Masters Super 500 tournament with hard-fought wins over their respective opponents here on Friday. While double Olympic medalist Sindhu, seeded sixth in the tournament, beat lower ranked Yi Man Zhang of China 21-16, 13-21, 22-20, Prannoy

## BAI to conduct trials for Asia Junior C'ship

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
The Badminton Association of India (BAI) will conduct a selection trial at the Karnail Singh Stadium here from June 4 to 7 to pick the team for the Asian Junior Championships. The Asian Junior championships is scheduled to be held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia from July 7 to 16. The players will be selected on the basis of their performances in the selection trials. The trials will include top-8 boys and girls singles shuttlers

as well as top-4 pairs from doubles events from the All India Junior Ranking Badminton Tournament held in Guwahati earlier this month, along with top-4 singles players and top-2 doubles pairs in the BAI rankings. Anwesha Gowda (4th), Anupama Upadhyaya (8th), Unnati Hooda (14th) and five other players, who are ranked inside top-20 in BWF rankings, will also take part in the trials. India have so far won nine medals, including two gold, one silver and six bronze in the continental championships. semifinals of Saturday. Prannoy has never played against the 21-year-old Adinata, who began playing at the senior level just last year. In another men's singles quarterfinal, Srikanth lost 21-16, 16-21, 11-21 to Adinata in 57 minutes to bow out of the tournament.

# GT CRUSH MI, REACH IPL 2023 FINAL

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Shubman Gill extended his sensational run with a third century of the season as Gujarat Titans crushed Mumbai Indians by 62 runs to storm into their second consecutive IPL final here on Friday.

Gill's 60-ball 129 (7x4s, 10x6s) fired Gujarat Titans to a huge 233/3 and in reply, Mumbai Indians, struck by a string of injuries, went down fighting in Qualifier 2 with Suryakumar Yadav (61) and Tilak Varma (43) providing the resistance.

Mohit Sharma, introduced in the 15th over, finished with figures of 2.2-0-10-5, triggering a collapse as MI collapsed from 149/4 in 14 overs to 171 all-out in 18.2 overs.

The 23-year-old Gill scored his third century in the last four innings, recorded the highest score of the season for any batter and took his tally to 851 runs in yet another sensational knock.

Gill's whirlwind knock made him only the second Indian batter after Virat Kohli (2016) and overall fourth in the history, after Jos Buttler (2022) and David Warner (2016), to score more than 800 runs in an IPL season.

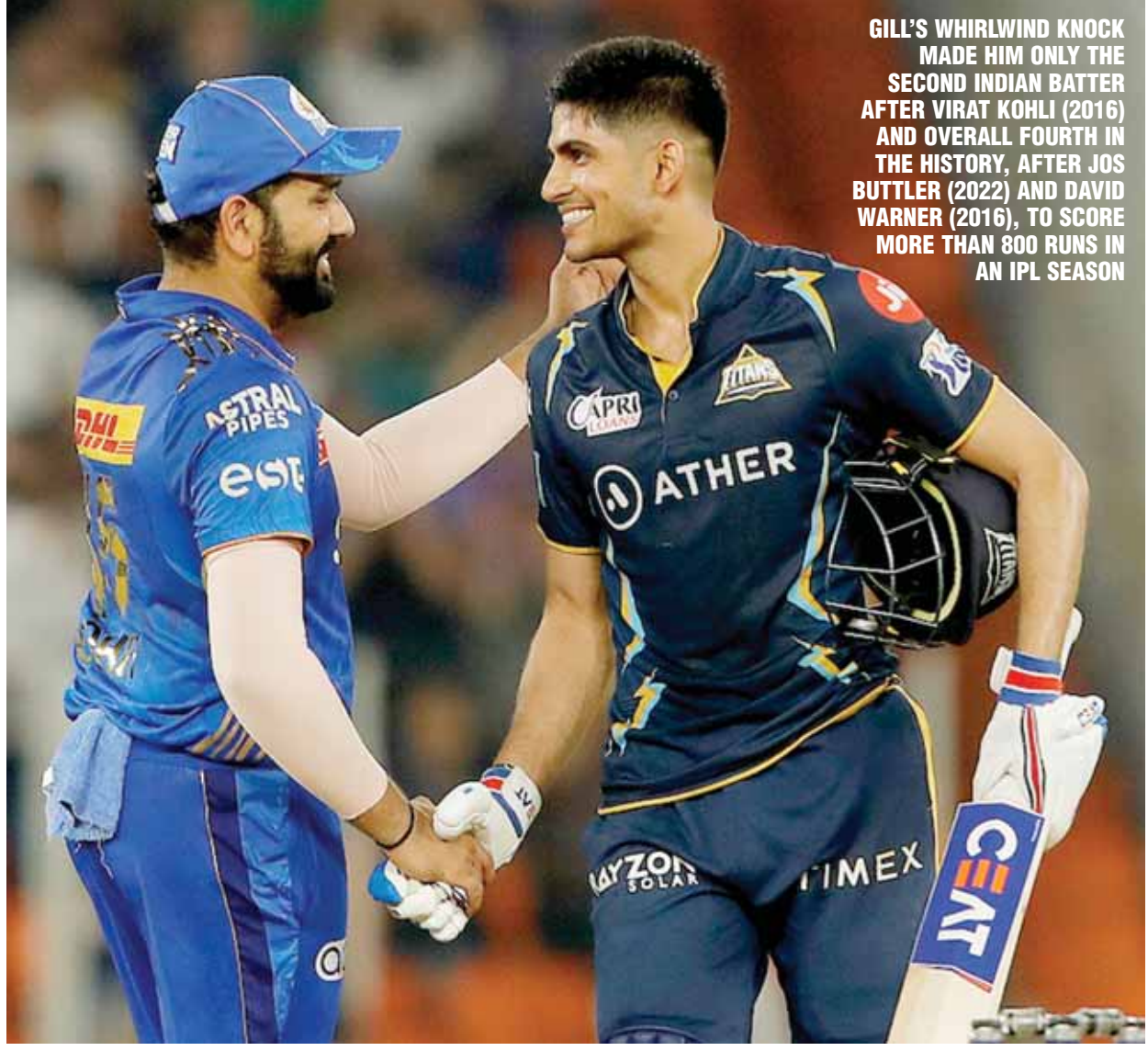
Chasing 234, MI were forced to rejig their batting line-up with Ishan Kishan being substituted after he ran into Chris Jordan during change of overs in the first innings and hurt his eye.

Rohit Sharma also copped a blow to his hand while fielding and Cameron Green had to retire hurt for a bit, after being smacked on his left forearm by Hardik Pandya.

Mohammad Shami caused early troubles for Mumbai, getting rid of makeshift opener Nehal Wadhwa (4) and Rohit (8), but Varma took on the India and GT pace spearhead, hitting four fours and a six to collect 24 runs off the fifth over.

However, Varma's blitz did not last long as Rashid Khan cleaned him up after a 14-ball 43 (5x4s, 3x6s). MI reached 72 for three after the powerplay.

Suryakumar and Green kept the scoreboard ticking with their fourth wicket stand that took MI past the 100-run mark in the 10th over, but in the 12th, Josh Little ended their resistance by cleaning up the Australian.



**GILL'S WHIRLWIND KNOCK MADE HIM ONLY THE SECOND INDIAN BATTER AFTER VIRAT KOHLI (2016) AND OVERALL FOURTH IN THE HISTORY, AFTER JOS BUTTLER (2022) AND DAVID WARNER (2016), TO SCORE MORE THAN 800 RUNS IN AN IPL SEASON**

Green struck four fours and two sixes in his 20-ball 30.

Suryakumar tried to take the game deep with 61 from 38 balls with seven fours and two sixes, but lost his leg stump while attempting to hit Mohit Sharma in the fine leg region.

Mohit struck again to remove Vishnu Vinod (5) in the same over and Rashid shut the doors on MI with the wicket of Tim David (2) in the 16th.

Earlier, Gill began sturdily and turned brutal in the second half of the innings, adding 138 runs for the second wicket with B Sai Sudharsan, who happily played second fiddle with a 31-ball 43 before he was retired out.

Gill hit three sixes off MI's hero of the last game, Akash Madhwal (1/53), in the 12th over to cross the 800-run mark.

He brought up his fifty off 32 balls with two sixes and three fours and unleashed a flurry of sixes against seamers and spinners alike here at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

Gill also surpassed Yashasvi Jaiswal's 62-ball 124 to record the highest individual score this season, with Mumbai Indians being on the receiving end on both the occasions.

In the process, the 23-year-old also went past RCB's Faf du Plessis (730 runs) to claim the Orange Cap.

Additionally, Gill's 129 bettered Virender Sehwag's 122 against Chennai Super Kings in the 2014 season as the highest score for a batter in the IPL playoffs.

After a 30-minute delay to the start due to rain, GT had made a sedate start.

A vital moment had come at the end of the sixth over when Tim David at mid-on dropped a catch to provide Gill with a lifeline, with GT finishing the powerplay at 50/0.

Gill certainly had luck on his side as twice in as many balls he managed to survive, off Kumar Kartikeya.

After Kishan could not run-out the batter who had gone down the track and had an inside edge deflecting the ball into his pads, Gill hit the next delivery in the air only to find the ball dropping very close to the fielder at deep midwicket.

## Divine to perform at IPL 2023 finale

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Rapper Divine will be performing at the finale of the 2023 Indian Premier League (IPL) on May 28.

Divine, whose real name is Vivian Fernandes, will perform at the first-ever mid-innings/half-time show during the finale, to be held at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, a press release stated.

The rapper will be joined by long-time collaborator and Canadian play-back singer Jonita Gandhi for a special collaborative showcase of their track "Naya Sher", which features Indian cricketer Virat Kohli.

"I am proud to be representing the hip hop movement at the country's largest stadium and bringing together the parallel worlds of cricket and music. I'm looking forward to performing for all my fans all around the world, including all the sports aficionados of the country at the most prominent sporting league of the country."

"This is my very first performance at the IPL and I'm excited and grateful. From being a big fan of cricket, to playing at the stadium for the finals, it truly is a dream come true," Divine said in a statement.



## Dhoni takes someone else's trash and makes it treasure: Hayden

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mahendra Singh Dhoni is a "magician" who can turn someone else's "trash into treasure" says the great Matthew Hayden, who also reckons that the former India captain's unmatched contribution to the CSK success story makes his playing future with the franchise "almost irrelevant".

Dhoni's tactical genius has played a big part in CSK reaching their 10th IPL final. He did not have the best of bowling attacks at his disposal at the start of the tournament but he has been able to bring the best out of it. How he has used Ajinkya Rahane and Shivam Dube in the batting department has also been praised widely.

Dhoni, who has played with a knee injury throughout the tournament, has given himself 8-9 months to decide on his playing future. Hayden, however, feels the World Cup winning captain will not be around for the next IPL.

"MS is a magician. He takes someone else's trash and makes them treasure. He is a very skilful and positive captain. He said something really interesting which I thought summed up not only his humility and his trust around cricket where he is represented and that is in Tamil Nadu Cricket Association," Hayden said.

"The alignment between that association and the franchise, how strong that is in terms of building that process. To me that is MS. There is a systematic way of going through things and working through them. He did that for India and he is doing it for Chennai Super Kings. "Whether he plays or not next year it is almost irrelevant. Personally I don't think he will but then he is M S Dhoni," he said at an event organised by University of Technology Sydney (UTS). With the rapid rise of T20 cricket around the world, it has become increasingly difficult for the players to play all three formats.

Hayden thinks not only that makes it impossible for players to commit to all formats, it also questions the future of the game, especially the 50-over version. "The time of three-format players is shortly coming to an end. I would challenge the game around whether those formats are even viable anymore."

"It seems to me there is great enthusiasm still to play Test cricket and World Test Championship is a good example of that. Otherwise I see lot of T20 cricket being played."

## BCCI could rest all seniors for Afghanistan series

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Contrary to reports in some quarters that BCCI is planning to cancel the proposed home series against Afghanistan due to cramped calendar, there is possibility that a second string team might play with all seniors including ODI and Test captain Rohit Sharma along with senior player Virat Kohli rested before West Indies tour.

All Indian players were involved in a gruelling IPL for nearly two months and will be in England for a one-off WTC final but after that, most seniors like Kohli and Rohit will need rest before they embark on West Indies tour where all three formats will be played. Kohli and Rohit are certain two play Tests and ODIs and would need adequate rest.

With only window for Afghanistan series between June 20-30, the BCCI might have



shorten the series or may be only convert it into either T20I or ODI series and play the second string side led by Hardik Pandya.

Mirwais Ashraf, the president of the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) is in India for the final of the IPL and while a meeting between the members of the Asian Cricket Council is slated to take place, India and Afghanistan cricket boards could also finalise the details of their proposed white-ball series.

The Indian team has a packed schedule lined up after the conclusion of the IPL. While the coaching staff and some members of the team have already flown to England to prepare for the final of the World Test Championship against Australia starting on June 7, there is also a full tour of the Caribbean lined up ahead.

India will play two Tests, three ODIs and five T20Is against the West Indies from July 12 to August 13, after which the team is expected to play a three-match T20I series in Ireland. The Ireland series will mostly feature IPL performers and even Pandya could rest from that series keeping Asia Cup in mind.

The ACC board members will meet on the sidelines of the IPL final to finalise the future of the Asia Cup 2023, which means that the workload will only increase for the Indian players, given that there is an all-important 50-over World Cup lined up for October-November.

If finalised, the Asia Cup 2023 is expected to be played in September, which means that the Indian players will be hard pressed to find time to rest and recuperate, and a packed calendar has already witnessed big injuries to key players such as Jasprit Bumrah and Shreyas Iyer with no set timeline of comeback.

Additionally, in September, India are also set to play a three-match ODI series against Australia — a second such series this year — to finalise World Cup preparations.

According to 'Cricbuzz', the BCCI is finding it difficult to schedule the Afghanistan series, proposed to be having three ODIs, given the time constraint and also because the broadcast deal with Disney Star has ended and a new tender is yet to be issued.

However, a senior BCCI secretary Jay Shah during an earlier interaction with media in Mumbai had said "BCCI media rights tender will be on schedule this year (June-July) and will depend on the Afghanistan tour, but more likely the process will start from the Australia series. The Board will speak to all stakeholders concerned and will come up with an interim decision."

## WTC winners to get \$1.6 mn prize money

PTI ■ DUBAI

The winners of next month's World Test Championship Final between India and Australia at The Oval will take home USD 1.6 million in prize money, while runners-up will get richer by USD 800,000, the ICC announced here on Friday.

The championship decider will be played at The Oval, London from June 7-11 with June 12 as the reserve day.

The tournament prize money is the same as that for the inaugural World Test Championship Final in 2019-21 — a total purse of USD 3.8 million besides the WTC Mace.

The Kane Williamson-led New Zealand side were rewarded with USD 1.6 million besides the glittering Mace in Southampton two years ago, courtesy an eight-wicket win over India in the six-day final.

All nine teams will get a share in the USD 3.8 million purse with South Africa earning USD 450,000 for finishing third in the WTC 2021-23 standings.

England, who made a late surge and finished their campaign in fourth spot, will bag



## Oz include Peirson as cover for Inglis

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Australia have selected wicketkeeper Jimmy Peirson as cover for back-up gloveman Josh Inglis, who will return home after the opening Ashes Test for the birth of his first child.

Alex Carey is Australia's first-choice keeper for the World Test Championship (WTC) final against India and the five Ashes Tests and Inglis has been selected as his back-up.

But Inglis will return to Perth after the first Ashes Test starting on June 16 and his place will be taken up before the second Test at Lord's by 30-year-old Queensland gloveman Peirson, who has 65 first-class games to his credit, according to cricket.Com.Au on Friday.

The Australian team management has said Inglis will rejoin the squad later in the series.

Peirson, who has been impressive at the domestic and Australia 'A' level with both the bat and gloves, trained with the Test squad in Brisbane last week and would be fancying his chances of wearing the iconic Baggie Green during the Ashes.

The right-handed lower-order batter has improved his

batting drastically over the years, going from an average of less than 30 in his first 35 first-class games to 42.56, including six tons in 30 games since the 2020-21 season.

He also struck an unbeaten 128 for Australia 'A' during their tour of Sri Lanka last year.

Peirson's appearance in the Australian Test squad has partly been delayed because Tim Paine was the first-choice keeper for a long time and then Carey replaced the former captain, who stepped down due to a controversy ahead of the 2021 Ashes series at home.

Peirson said he was driven by the desire to set higher standards for himself.

"These guys (Carey and Inglis among others) are setting their benchmark, and I want to set my benchmark higher, and maybe bring a few other attributes into that as well, through leadership or whatever else," said Peirson. "It's great to have that competition. That's what drives you to be the best you can be. If someone's pipping you, you want to be better than them. That's certainly one of my great driving factors: I want to be the best, I want to be the next man in."

## Roy ends England deal to play T20 cricket in USA

AP ■ LONDON

Batting star Jason Roy is ending his England contract to play in the first season of Major League Cricket in the United States.

The aggressive opener, who has just returned from a stint with Kolkata Knight Riders in the Indian Premier League, reportedly has an offer from their affiliated MLC franchise, the Los Angeles Knight Riders.

It is understood the 32-year-old has been offered about £300,000 (\$370,000) for the first two seasons of the new American Twenty20 competition, which launches in July.

Roy was dropped from England's central contract list last



year, downgraded to an incremental deal worth between £60,000 and £70,000.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said in a statement on Thursday that it had agreed for Roy to play in the US "on the proviso that he gives up the remainder of his ECB incremental contract, which both parties have agreed to."

"The ECB wish to clarify that this decision will not affect Jason's selection for England teams going forward," it added. "We have absolute confidence and faith that Jason is committed to England cricket."

The aggressive opener did not feature in England's T20 World Cup triumph in October and November, but has held on to his place in the 50-over side and will

hope to feature in this year's 50-over World Cup defence in India.

The Surrey player said in a statement on Twitter that he would never walk away from England.

"Representing my country continues to be my proudest moment as a professional cricketer," said Roy, who has scored nearly 6,000 international runs in all formats.

"I hope to play for England for many more years — that remains my priority."

He added: "As a single format player with no central contract I wanted to take the opportunity to play this competition as there are currently no scheduling conflicts with England. It benefits me as an England player to play as much competitive cricket as possible."