

FIRST COLUMN

THE POWER OF THE HUMAN MIND

Settle your mind and clear accumulated dust, only then it gets purged



RAVI VALLURI

Ageons ago lived, Suddhodana, chieftain of the Sakyan republics. He was captivated with the thought of perpetuating the dynasty. However, his battle fatigued son Siddhartha, was not ensnared by the Mara of trappings of power, carnal pleasures and a family life. Siddhartha eschewed violence, cast away royal clothing and adorned ochre robes in search of the quintessential truth and was to become Buddha after intense tapas. Upon attaining enlightenment, the Compassionate One dissected the bewildering characteristics of the human mind. He was soon to quantify in a plain sailing manner, "We are what we think and our thoughts shape our lives."

The human mind is not resplendent with ennobling thoughts if the prana levels are low. The prana level increases (through yoga, pranayama, meditation and Sudarshan Kriya) and at that moment an individual realises the magnetic potential of the human mind.

Once there was a Good Samaritan, Sudhakar. He happened to read the maiden effort of a civil servant called the Magic of the Mind. This gentleman, with trepidation, became a 'Facebook friend' of the mandarin and persuaded him to be interviewed by a few T.V. channels. However, the thought process of the public functionary- who was a recovered alcoholic- doubted the sincerity of the Facebook friend. In disgust, he 'blocked' and then 'unblocked' the gentleman, perhaps more to quell the pangs of his own conscience. Finally in sheer vexation he gave in to the entreaties of the 'Facebook friend'. Soon an amazing pattern emerged and the administrator was invited by several media houses and estimable institutions to deliver lectures as to how he combated and conquered the battle against the bottle. Only much later did he realise that Sudhakar had lost some close relatives to the perils of alcoholism.



The autarchic mind of the bureaucrat was ossified and looking at life through the prism of tunnel vision. One day, after a series of interviews, the functionary received a distress call from a lady, who had happened to listen to one of his interviews and was also reading the book penned by the bureaucrat, which captured his triumph over alcoholism. On receiving the call, he could empathise with the woman's husband who was fighting a grim battle against alcoholism. There was a sudden transmutation in the mind of the public servant and went on to guide the husband on how to attain sobriety.

Realisation and awareness are two iconic qualities that shine the light on the amazing power of the human mind. Several centuries ago, Gautama Buddha was travelling with a group of disciples. The Compassionate One felt thirsty and desired some water to quench his thirst. He asked a disciple to fetch some water from a nearby lake. The enthusiastic disciple rushed to the lake but was horrified to find the water turbid as a farmer had just crossed the lake on his bullock cart. He returned back remorsefully as he could not fulfil the wish of the holy Master. Buddha sent the disciple a couple of times to fetch water to quench his thirst. But to the dismay of the tutee on each occasion the water remained dirty and turbid. While the devotees were fidgety and distraught, Buddha remained patient. Eventually, the devotee animatedly brought fresh water from the lake and offered it. Buddha smiled and drank the water. He was to say, "You did nothing. The mud settled down and the water was purged of the impurities. Let your mind settle all the dust accumulated over a period of time." This is the amazing power of the human mind. Just let it settle down.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

Challenges loom ahead of July Union Budget



SHIVAJI SARKAR

The incoming Government would face the uphill task of navigating through a myriad of fiscal hurdles to foster sustainable growth



Despite it being too early to discuss the union budget to be presented in July, it is certain whichever combination comes back to power it would have to majorly review the February interim budget given the debates generated during elections. The election is veering around more on economic issues than the religion or Ram temple, though in certain regions these remain a potent issue and so the brands Narendra Modi and Yogi Adityanath. A larger section is concerned with the core economy, unemployment, farmers' issues, irrationally high prices, medical and health care costs, school and university fees, shooting costs of houses, high toll-jacked inflation and similar other issues.

Even showcasing of Indian economy as the fifth largest economy is not being accepted by a large section as reality. The farmers and citizens wonder while cars and tractors are allowed to run for 40 years like aircraft across the world, why a pro-people Government should be in a hurry to send these to junkyards in India, particularly when household debts are skyrocketing. The rural wisdom calls it weird and tries to locate the linkages of Government functionaries with the car makers.

Questions are also raised on the Rs 16.87 lakh crore debt repayment in the 2024-25 budget. This effectively cuts the actual budget of Rs 47.65 lakh crore to about Rs 31 lakh crore. The repayment burden in 2025 is slated to be higher. The opposition's sharp angling on core economic issues is being rebutted by the ruling combine by charging that if the opposition gets to power it would sell "mangalsutras" and delve into divisive politics. The Election Commission has issued warnings to the ruling party for its wry comments.

Low voting in 190 constituencies in major States like UP, Bihar and Maharashtra raises concern among all parties. The voter is apathetic despite



THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO TAKE DRASTIC STEPS TO BRING DOWN THE PRICES OF EDIBLE OIL, FOOD GRAINS, VEGETABLES, POTATOES AND ONIONS, AS WELL AS SCHOOL FEES AND EXPENSIVE HEALTH CARE, MILK AND OTHER COMMODITIES

many moves by the Election Commission. Is that a reflection on governance? This has not put the issues on the back burner. According to RBI, inflation rises at 5.5 per cent a year and has shot beyond 55 per cent in compounded terms causing a huge rise in prices. Nobody has got such a raise in their salaries, not even Government employees.

The new Government would have to take drastic steps to bring down the prices of edible oil, food grains, vegetables, potatoes and onions as well as school fees and expensive health care, milk and other commodities. People are unwilling to buy the argument that inflation is built into the system. They rather equate it with corporate electoral bond doles to parties. The Government accepts the petrol prices are high, cut it by Rs 2 just before the polls. It has no impact on the voters' psyche.

The voter is not happy with the so-called demonstrative developments like demolition and construction of large office buildings, rail stations and rampant construction of roads or metro. Constructions devastate the hills of Himachal, Kashmir, Uttarakhand and the North East. Kisans who became millionaires overnight with the acquisition of their land for roads are not happy about losing their livelihood. Most villagers rue the roads that divide their habitats and relationships for a road they can't use without paying a toll. It is a serious issue because the Kisan also pays Rs 30 per litre petrol cess toll introduced with the promise of ending the toll. All these benefit bulk profiteers and the least of jobs.

A new Government has to initiate drastic changes and reorient policies. The major reason for joblessness is attributed to ad hoc decisions. Such constructions erode Government finance and build little assets. Southeast Asia tried it in the late 1990s and got into trouble in 1997. It would be wise on the part of the new Government to revive PSUs and ask the private sector to compete with them. It would create jobs, add to the national economy and create a fair playground.

People question the rationale of parting a part of Indian Oil to a private giant or giving out ports to private players. At least one such port has become notorious for being a smugglers' den. The universities, IITs and Government institutions have been given a mandate to raise tuition fees every year. The private ones hike far more. Schools and universities need financing from the Government and education costs must be cut down. Congress promises apprenticeship to every graduate. Looks good but it is not practical. The scheme has failed several times. India's overall exports fell by 8.1 per cent and exports to its free trade partners shrank by 18 per cent in the first half of 2023. The country's trade deficit ballooned to \$78.2 billion in the last financial year. India's export values across all commodities declined to \$351 billion during April-January from \$366 billion a year ago, underlining the impact of the global economic slowdown and tightening of interest rates in Western countries. These numbers have emerged amid India's push to sign free trade deals with the UK and the European Union. The International Monetary Fund

says that the global slowdown is on. However India projects its march to a \$5 trillion economy and it is not easy. The West has become more protectionist and keen on imposing a carbon tax. The West needs to protect its bread.

Lower productivity can result in reduced job creation within the manufacturing sector, leading to unemployment or underemployment. The International Labour Organisation finds low pay and wages as serious challenges. When productivity declines, the incentives for firms to invest in research and development or adopt new technologies diminish, leading to a slower pace in the manufacturing sector. However, the challenge of rising household debt and falling savings could weigh on long-term growth sustainability.

The FDI flow is low at \$17.96 billion. Despite a supposed buzzing market, it has not risen much. The new Government also has the challenge to cut personal income-tax rates from 39 per cent to 22 per cent in tune with the corporate tax. High taxation hits the purchasing capacity and concomitant market problems.

In short, the new Government has to stress issues regarding taxes, education, health, livelihood, low tolls and better deal with farmers. Both manifestos of the BJP and Congress speak of too many doles and caste-related benefits. If the Government can address the basic issues and make it one of the most affordable economies, India's journey will be smooth. It is a dream, if comes true it will be the most liveable country.

(The author is a senior journalist; views are personal)

Celebrating the universal language of dance

From traditional Indian classical dance forms to contemporary global dance phenomena, dance continues to inspire, heal and unite communities

On April 14 last year, history was made in Assam, India, as a Guinness World Record was set for the largest gathering of Bihu dancers. Over 11,000 dancers from different communities and backgrounds came together to perform the traditional dance of Assam, watched live by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It was a spectacular display of cultural diversity and unity. This event was a shining example of how cultural diversity can bring people together and foster a sense of emotional bonding and appreciation of one another's culture and traditions.

More recently as part of the 'Raag Seva' in a breathtaking display of timeless grace and unwavering passion, the 90-year-old actor-dancer and



RAJDEEP PATHAK

Padma Vibhushan awardee Vyjayanthimala Bali, enchanted spectators with her ethereal Bharatanatyam performance in Ayodhya. In this rich mosaic of human expression, dance emerges as a timeless gem, casting its spell across generations and captivating hearts through the ages. Beyond mere movement, it embodies a symphony of creativity, infusing the soul with unbridled joy. A graceful interplay of rhythm

and emotion, it offers solace from the burdens of modern life, intertwining threads of happiness into the fabric of existence.

Welcome to the rhythm of life, as we celebrate the 'International Dance Day' on April 29th every year, since 1982. Dance helps to change lives. The 'Navras', which is used to express joy, sadness, love, anger and many other emotions, is a way of celebrating life and creating a sense of community.

This Day serves as a platform aimed at fostering awareness regarding the intrinsic value of dance and facilitating the widespread promotion of the dance community's endeavours. Central to its mission is the aspiration that Governments and influential figures will

recognize the significance of dance and extend support towards its cultivation. We are all aware of Yo-Yo Ma's 'Silk Road Ensemble', a musical group founded by the cellist Yo-Yo Ma, where musicians from China, Iran, India and Spain come together and use their music to create a bridge between cultures and promote understanding between people from different backgrounds. Through cultural collaboration, this is a forum for the exchange of ideas, tradition and innovation across borders.

Also, the 'OneBeat' initiative, which brings together musicians from around the world to collaborate and create new music - was funded by the U.S. Department of State - aims to promote cultural exchange

and create a global community of musicians. 'OneBeat' has brought together musicians from countries such as Syria, Russia and Cuba, to name a few, not only providing a platform for musicians to share their music but also creating new collaborations that transcend cultural and linguistic barriers.

Dance also helps in promoting intercultural dialogue. Dance companies worldwide come together to create new works that reflect their cultural traditions and explore common themes. One such example is the 'Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater', which has been promoting diversity and inclusion through dance for over 60 years. The company's performances celebrate the African-American cultural

experience and explore universal themes such as love, loss and identity.

Not only this, the 'National Ballet of Cuba' is a dance company that promotes intercultural dialogue through its performances. Founded in 1948 by Alicia Alonso, one of the most famous ballerinas of the 20th century, it is known for its unique style that combines elements of classical ballet with Afro-Cuban and Spanish dance traditions.

Back in India, 'The Kalakshetra Foundation', - of the many foundations and institutions that exist to popularize Indian classical dance forms - Chennai-based dance school, founded by Rukmini Devi Arundale in 1936, sought to revive and promote Indian classical dance forms and is

today a leading institution that trains students in various forms of Indian classical dance, including Bharatanatyam, Kathakali and Kuchipudi. Similarly, the 'Nrityagram Dance Village', near Bangalore, which was founded in 1990 by Protima Gauri, a renowned Indian classical dancer, is a unique institution that offers a holistic approach to dance training, focusing not only on dance techniques, but also on aspects such as yoga, meditation and Indian mythology. The institute has gained global recognition and has collaborated with many international dance companies to create new works that blend Indian classical dance with contemporary dance forms. We cannot miss Bollywood dance, which has become a

global phenomenon and has created a platform for people from different backgrounds to come together and celebrate India's vibrant culture. Using different dance styles from Indian classical forms to ballet; to cabaret; to hip-hop, break dance and so on - each step encompasses a unique rhythm and style involving different generations tap to the beats.

As we celebrate the universal language of dance and its ability to unite people, it is also important to acknowledge the Guru-Shishya Parampara and celebrate the beauty of dance and its ability to create a better world for all.

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

S Korea's opp leader urges prez to accept probe against wife, officials

AP ■ SEOUL

Emboldened by his party's recent election win, South Korea's opposition leader pressured President Yoon Suk Yeol to accept special investigations into allegations involving top officials and his wife, as they met Monday for talks on bipartisan cooperation.

The meeting was their first since Yoon took office in 2022 after defeating Lee Jae-myung in the country's closest presidential election race. During their 2022 campaigns, Yoon, Lee and their supporters demonised each other and filed dozens of lawsuits against one another.

Yoon proposed the meeting as he faces growing calls to cooperate with Lee's Democratic Party, whose victory in the April 10 parliamentary election allows it to extend its control of the single-chamber National Assembly until after Yoon's single five-year term ends in 2027.



South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, right, shakes hands with main opposition Democratic Party leader Lee Jae-myung during a meeting at the presidential office in Seoul South Korea, Monday, AP

In his lengthy opening remarks, Lee said the election results mean "the people's stern demand for correcting wrong government administrations, addressing economic troubles and restoring democratic rules. Lee urged Yoon to accept independent probes into the 2022 Halloween crash in Seoul that killed 159 people, and the 2023 death of a marine who drowned during a search-and-rescue operation for flood victims. Lee's party has accused Yoon of ignoring public demands and retaining top officials and military commanders responsible for the deadly incidents.

Lee also asked Yoon to resolve "diverse suspicions involving his family" that "poses a big burden on government operations." That was apparently a reference to first lady Kim Keon Hee, who faces an allegation of involvement in a stock price manipulation and other scandals. "I'd say it would be good for you, as president, to respect the National Assembly and consider the opposition party as a partner for government operations," Lee said.

While listening to Lee's statement, Yoon nodded several times and said he had expected Lee to make such comments

but didn't elaborate. In a briefing after the meeting, senior presidential adviser Lee Do-woon said that Yoon told Lee that he won't oppose a special law to investigate the Halloween deaths but noted Yoon's party has concerns over an ad-hoc investigation committee. He didn't mention Yoon's responses to demands for other probes.

During the meeting, Lee also asked Yoon to accept his contentious idea of the government giving 250,000 won (about USD 180) to all South Koreans as a way to boost the economy, a step that Yoon's party has called a populist measure. Lee Do-woon, the presidential adviser, said Yoon said that he prefers selectively supporting those in need.

In a separate briefing, Democratic Party spokesperson Park Sung-joon accused Yoon of lacking the resolve to revive public livelihoods. Park cited Lee as suggesting he was disappointed at the meetings

results though the start of direct communication with Yoon would still be meaningful. No agreement was reached, but Yoon's office said the president and Lee agreed to meet frequently without setting a date for their next meeting. In one positive news for bipartisan cooperation, Lee told Yoon that his party would support the government's high-stakes push to increase medical school students, which prompted thousands of young doctors to walk out of the job in February. The government recently suggested it's open to halving its target medical school enrollment increase to 1,000 per year from the previously proposed 2,000, but doctors say they can't accept any increase in students.

Yoon has said South Korea needs to create more doctors as it has one of the world's most rapidly aging populations and its doctors-to-patient ratio is among the lowest in advanced economies. Doctors say schools

can't deal with a too steep increase in students, but critics say they simply worry the supply of more doctors would eventually result in lowering their income.

The parliamentary election was seen as a litmus test of Yoon, who has been struggling with low approval rating and an opposition-controlled parliament that has limited his policy agenda since his inauguration. Critics say the election defeat was largely attributable to the government's failure to suppress rising prices and other economic problems and Yoon's personal management and leadership styles.

Despite the election defeat, Yoon's major foreign policy agendas will likely remain unchanged as they mostly don't require parliamentary endorsements. Yoon has pushed hard to boost trilateral cooperation with the United States and Japan to cope with North Korea's evolving nuclear threats and other challenges.

Dar's surprise elevation as deputy PM a 'pre-planned' move: Report

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

The surprise elevation of Pakistan Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar — a close confidant of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif — as the deputy prime minister was in reality "pre-planned" and is reportedly a move to "compensate" the PML-N supremo for the loss of the finance portfolio, it emerged on Monday.

Dar, 73, a chartered accountant and a veteran politician from the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party, was appointed as deputy prime minister by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday "with immediate effect and until further orders". Shehbaz Sharif and Dar are currently in Saudi Arabia for the World Economic Forum's (WEF) special meeting. According to the Dawn newspaper, Dar's new appointment "took many by surprise, but drew hardly any criticism from its allies". Dar being "awarded"

the "rarely filled" slot of deputy prime minister has raised many questions, the report said. The main talking point is that PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif wants to have his "confidant" in a key position in the federal cabinet to "compensate him for the loss of the finance portfolio", it said.

The move was also seen in the context of Nawaz Sharif taking over the reins of the ruling PML-N party as its president, a position he had lost following his conviction in the Panama Papers case, the report said. Dar is considered close to Nawaz Sharif due to matrimonial links between the two families, as his son is the son-in-law of the elder Sharif.

An insider claimed that the move to appoint Dar as deputy prime minister was "pre-planned", the report said. At the time of the formation of the coalition government, it was decided that Dar would become the Deputy Prime Minister.



However, according to a Geo News report, the appointment of a four-time finance minister as foreign minister suggested a ramped-up role for economics in the nation's diplomacy as the cash-strapped country tries to secure another International Monetary Fund (IMF) Deal and shore up external financing from foreign capitals.

Dar served as finance minister from 1998 to 1999, then from March to May 2008. He again

led the finance ministry from 2013 to 2017 and then from 2022 to 2023. He has also served the country as minister for industry and investment from February 1997 to July 1997 as well as commerce from December 1997 to October 1999.

According to the Dawn report, when Nawaz Sharif was the prime minister, Dar was acting as the de facto deputy prime minister, heading dozens of government and parliamentary committees as its chairperson. Although there is no provision for a deputy prime minister in the Constitution, Dar is the second lawmaker to hold the post. Chaudhry Parvez Elahi served as Deputy Prime Minister when the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was in power from June 25, 2012, to June 29, 2013. His role at that time was mostly symbolic as he was rewarded by then-President Asif Ali Zardari for supporting the PPP-led government.

4 suspects involved in Chinese engineers' killings arrested

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan authorities claimed on Monday that they have arrested four suspects involved in the killing of Chinese engineers in a deadly terrorist attack last month. Five Chinese nationals and a Pakistani driver were killed in the attack on March 26 when a vehicle-borne suicide bomber targeted a convoy escorting Chinese engineers in the remote Besham area of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province. No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack, but officials said that the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was involved in the attack. The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province said that a probe by a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) exposed the network of terrorists, claiming that the "key actors" of the network involved in the attack have been identified. "Four accused have been arrested... efforts are underway to capture the entire network," the CTD Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa said in a statement.

Pak Sharif discusses new loan programme with IMF chief

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has met IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva and discussed a new loan programme for the cash-strapped country to put the economy back on track.

In a meeting on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Special Meeting in Riyadh, the premier thanked Georgieva, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director, for her support to Pakistan in securing the USD 3 billion standby arrangement (SBA) from IMF last year that was now nearing its completion.

Pakistan secured the USD 3 billion IMF programme in June last year, which helped it avert a sovereign default. Pakistan is seeking a new long-term Extended Fund Facility (EFF) after the current SBA expires this month.

"Both sides also discussed Pakistan entering into another IMF program to ensure that the

gains made in the past year were consolidated and its economic growth trajectory remained positive," according to a statement issued by the PM Office on Sunday.

Sharif reiterated his government's commitment to put Pakistan's economy back on track. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has said Islamabad could secure a staff-level agreement on the new programme by early July. Islamabad says it is seeking a loan over at least three years to help achieve macroeconomic stability and execute long-overdue and painful structural reforms, though Aurangzeb has declined to detail what size of the programme the country seeks. If secured, it would be Pakistan's 24th IMF bailout.

The USD 350 billion economy faces a chronic balance of payments crisis, with nearly USD 24 billion to repay in debt and interest over the next fiscal year — three times more than its central bank's foreign currency reserves, according to Geo

News. According to the state-run PTV News post on X, this was the first meeting between the prime minister and Georgieva since his re-election last month. They last met in Paris in June 2023 on the margins of the Summit for New Global Financial Pact.

The IMF Executive Board is expected to meet on Monday to decide on the final tranche of USD 1.1 billion under SBA, the post said. IMF chief Georgieva appreciated the leadership of Sharif for timely securing SBA last year, according to the statement.

During the meeting, the prime minister said that he had directed his financial team to carry out structural reforms, ensure strict fiscal discipline and pursue prudent policies that would ensure macroeconomic stability and sustained economic growth.

The IMF MD shared her institution's perspective on the ongoing programme with the premier, including the review process.

Indonesian, Singaporean leaders hold annual talks, joined by successors

AP ■ BOGOR

Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Indonesian President Joko Widodo on Monday celebrated the countries' continued cooperation at their seventh and final Leaders' Retreat in Jakarta, an annual meeting between the two Southeast Asian leaders that was also attended this year by their successors.

Lee's visit to Indonesia is one of his last working trips before he hands over the reins of his administration to a new leader. The eldest son of Singaporean founding father Lee Kuan Yew announced his resignation earlier this month after two decades at the helm. His deputy prime minister and finance minister, Lawrence Wong, will succeed him in May.

Widodo, Indonesia's first president from outside the traditional Jakarta elite who is widely known by the nickname Jokowi, will be succeeded by Prabowo Subianto, who takes office in October.

All four top officials met Monday at the colonial-style Presidential Palace in Bogor, just outside Jakarta, as the retreat became a passing of the guard for both countries.

"I'm glad that President Jokowi and I are handing over in good state to our successors," Lee said at a joint news conference with Widodo after the meeting. "I have every confidence that Mr. Prabowo and DPM Lawrence will continue to bring the relationship to greater heights."

Singapore's Prime Minister's Office said in a statement ahead of Lee's visit that the two leaders would take stock of the significant progress made in bilateral cooperation during their tenures.

Previously, the two countries ratified three milestone agreements, including a defense cooperation agreement and

separate treaties on extradition and airspace.

The agreements were signed during the 2022 leaders' retreat and came into effect this year. At this year's retreat, the leaders oversaw the signing of several agreements, including an update on defence cooperation which Lee said reflects the two countries' robust defence ties. A similar defense agreement was first signed by the two countries in April 2007, but didn't go into effect after opposition in Indonesia's Parliament.

The defence cooperation agreement will significantly boost Singapore's ability to carry out naval and military exercises amid regional tensions over China's growing military strength.

The island city-state lacks maritime, land and airspace to effectively train its military. Indonesia, which holds huge land and maritime areas, has agreed to let Singapore carry out naval exercises with other nations in the Bravo area of the South China Sea four times a year — terms that previously faced criticism from Indonesian lawmakers.

"We completed these agreements, and they went into force last month," Lee said. "This shows that when we work together in a spirit of friendship and openness, we can address even the most complicated issues in a pragmatic and mutually beneficial manner." Widodo said they also discussed regional and global issues.

"We agreed to continue to encourage peace in the Middle East region and vowed to strengthen ASEAN centrality," Widodo said, referring to the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations. He added that Indonesia and Singapore agreed to cooperate on food security, energy transition, digital economy and healthcare.

Attack in Russia's North Caucasus leaves 2 cops, 5 gunmen dead

AP ■ MOSCOW

Moscow (AP): A group of militants attacked a police checkpoint in Russia's North Caucasus region, killing two officers, officials said on Monday. Four other officers were wounded and all five attackers were killed in the shootout in the Karachay-Cherkessia region late Sunday, according to the regional branch of Russia's Interior Ministry. The Investigative Committee, the country's top state criminal investigation agency, said the same gunmen had raided another police checkpoint in the region a week before, killing two police and injuring another. It didn't describe the attackers' affiliation or motive. While Chechnya has stabilized under the rule of Moscow-backed leader Ramzan Kadyrov after two separatist wars, violence linked to Islamists groups has occasionally erupted in other parts of Russia's volatile North Caucasus.

NATO's chief chides alliance countries for not being quicker to help Ukraine

AP ■ KYIV

NATO countries haven't delivered what they promised to Ukraine in time, the alliance's chief said Monday, allowing Russia to press its battlefield advantage while Kyiv's depleted forces wait for Western military supplies to arrive.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said that "serious delays in support have meant serious consequences on the battlefield" for Ukraine.

"NATO allies have not delivered what they promised," Stoltenberg said at a news conference in Kyiv with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, referring to delays by the U.S. and Europe in sending weapons and ammunition. Ukraine's troops were compelled to make a tactical retreat from three villages in the eastern region, where the Kremlin's forces have been making incremental gains against their weaker opponent,

Ukraine's army chief said Sunday. The Russian Defense Ministry claimed Monday its forces had also taken the village of Semenivka.

"The lack of ammunition has allowed the Russians to push forward along the front line. Lack of air defense has made it possible for more Russian missiles to hit their targets, and the lack of deep strike capabilities has made it possible for the Russians to concentrate more forces," Stoltenberg said.

Ukraine and its Western partners are in a race against the clock to deploy critical new military aid that can help check the recent slow and costly but steady Russian advance across eastern areas, as well as thwart drone and missile attacks.

Zelenskyy said new Western supplies have started arriving, but slowly. "This process must be speeded up," he said. Though the 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line has shifted little since early in the war, the Kremlin's forces have in

recent weeks edged forward, especially in the Donetsk region, by sheer weight of numbers and massive firepower used to bludgeon defensive positions.

Kyiv's Western partners have repeatedly vowed to stand with Ukraine "for as long as it takes." But vital U.S. military help was held up for six months by political differences in Washington, and Europe's military hardware production has not been able to keep up with demand. Ukraine's own manufacturing of heavy weapons is only now starting to gain traction.

Russia is a far bigger country than Ukraine, with greater resources to draw on. It has also received weapon support from Iran and North Korea, the U.S. government says. Draw-out Ukrainian efforts to mobilize more troops, and the belated building of battlefield fortifications are other factors currently undermining Ukraine's war effort, military analysts say.

Thailand FM resigns after being dropped as deputy prime minister

AP ■ BANGKOK

Bangkok (AP): Thailand's foreign minister abruptly resigned in dissatisfaction over a Cabinet reshuffle that removed him as one of the country's deputy prime ministers. Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin on Monday confirmed the resignation of Parnpree Bahiddha-Nugara, saying that he respected the decision, and that he has already started looking for a replacement.

Srettha said it was normal that some people would be upset by the reshuffle, adding that he already sent a message to Parnpree, apologising and thanking him for his work.

"For his work that has been in the good interest of the country, I believe that the new minister will continue these good efforts," he said, but did not say when the next appointee would take up the post. On Sunday, Srettha's government,

which took office less than a year ago, announced its first Cabinet shuffle. Shortly afterwards, the media circulated a document said to be a letter of resignation from Parnpree, dated Sunday, indicating his dissatisfaction that he was removed from the position of deputy prime minister and only remained foreign minister.

Ministers in Thailand are allowed to hold multiple Cabinet positions, and it is common for senior ministers to also be appointed as deputy prime ministers. Srettha said that the intention behind Parnpree being dropped as deputy prime minister was to allow him to concentrate on his role as foreign minister.

In an interview with the public broadcaster Thai PBS on Sunday, Parnpree said the letter was authentic but denied that he was unhappy.

China nod to Tesla cars as Musk lobbies in visit to Beijing

PTI ■ BEIJING

In a big relief for Tesla, its vehicles passed the key test of compliance with China's data security rules as its billionaire CEO Elon Musk who air dived to Beijing on Sunday met Premier Li Qiang to press for all clear approval for his cars which faced stiff competition from local rivals.

Musk's Tesla, which in recent months faced entry bans in Chinese government-affiliated buildings besides military bases due to security concerns over data leaks, "passed" the security assessment by a state-owned Chinese industrial association on Monday.

The China Association of Automobile Manufacturers and the National Computer Network Emergency Response Technical Team/Coordination Centre of China on Monday published a list of 76 models of

intelligent connected vehicles that meet the country's auto data security requirements, including those from Tesla.

The list was released after security tests jointly conducted by the two organisations clearing models of local Chinese electric vehicles, including Li Auto, Lotus, Hozon New Energy Automobile, and NIO besides BYD and Tesla, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. In tests starting in November 2023, cars were assessed to see if they met four compliance requirements — the anonymisation of facial and other information from outside the car, the default non-collection of in-car data, the in-car data processing, and the conspicuous notification of personal information processing.

The tests were carried out according to related laws and standards, and the carmakers submitted their models volun-

tarily, according to the association.

The association said the test aims to help regulate auto data processing, protect the rights of car users, and build a sound environment for auto data security and the industry.

Significantly, Tesla was included in the list that was released as Musk air dashed to Beijing on a surprise visit and met Chinese Premier Li Qiang and other officials.

This is Musk's second visit to China which is Tesla's second-biggest market. Built and put into operation in 2019, the Shanghai factory, Tesla's first gigafactory outside the US, delivered 947,000 vehicles last year, which was 33 per cent more than in 2022.

His visit came amid reports that Tesla car drivers in China faced entry bans in government-affiliated buildings as security concerns with the US

increased.

Chinese electric vehicles and its popular social media app TikTok faced restrictions and bans in the US over security and data breach concerns.

Reports said Tesla vehicles faced restrictions in China in an increasing number of meeting halls and exhibition centres across the country besides military bases.

Even highway operators, local authority agencies, and cultural centres reportedly began restricting the Tesla vehicles which began impacting its sales in China.

Musk arrived in Beijing on Sunday at the invitation of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade Automobile company as Tesla has been in negotiation with the Chinese authorities about the lifting of all restrictions, the state-run China Daily reported.

Tesla said in a statement that the endorsement of its Model 3 and Model Y vehicles assembled at the Shanghai Giga factory would lead to an easing of restrictions on its cars' access to certain state-backed entities, airports and motorways.

"The result of the review will give Tesla car owners and other fans of its cars a lot of confidence in driving them on the streets of China," Chen Jinzhu, CEO of consultancy Shanghai Mingliang Auto Service, said. "Since the CAAM is a government-backed auto industry association, the review certainly will have an influence on relevant authorities' policy-making," Chen told the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post.

The endorsement also bodes well for the approval of Tesla's Full Self-Driving (FSD) system, its autonomous driving soft-

ware, in China for which Musk reportedly is lobbying.

In his meeting with Musk, Premier Li said Tesla's operations in China represented a successful example of an economic tie-up between China and the US as he encouraged more cooperation between the two countries.

Musk's visit to Beijing aims to bring the Austin, Texas-based carmaker's autonomous driving technology to China amid intensified competition with local competitors in an EV market that accounts for about 60 per cent of global sales, the Post reported on Sunday.

Calling Tesla's development in China a successful example of trade cooperation between Beijing and Washington, Premier Li Qiang expressed the hope that the US will work in the same direction as China to promote the stable development of bilateral ties.

BSE shares tank nearly 19 per cent

After Sebi directive on regulatory fee

PTI NEW DELHI

Shares of BSE tanked nearly 19 per cent on Monday as the exchange is expected to shell out more regulatory fee after markets watchdog Sebi asked it to pay the fee based on the "notional value" of its options contracts rather than on the premium value.



since the introduction of derivative contracts, BSE has been paying the regulatory fee on "annual turnover" to the regulator considering premium value for option contracts, instead of the notional value.

Dish TV launches service for customers in Delhi to access TV, OTT content

PTI NEW DELHI

Direct-to-home service provider Dish TV on Monday said its existing as well as new customers in Delhi can now access TV and OTT content from popular apps without paying an additional cost.

"We are giving a facility to customers whereby they can switch to different apps with the same subscription without paying anything extra," Dish TV India Ltd CEO Manoj Dobhal told PTI.

Good growth, cloud migration, GenAI gaining traction: HCLTech CEO

PTI NEW DELHI

HCL Technologies' FY25 guidance of 3-5 per cent represents a "good growth" in current environment, CEO C Vijayakumar said, adding cloud migration and GenAI projects are gaining traction but financial services vertical could face 'headwinds'.

environment "continues to be under pressure" and the situation in FY25 appears "similar" to FY24. The deal pipeline looks "very good" and the company expects to convert some large opportunities soon, which will "definitely help in delivering the growth this year".



Rs 15,702 crore. The company posted Rs 1,09,913 crore in revenue in FY24, up 8.3 per cent from the previous fiscal. "Across the industry there is good mix of revenue, which is coming from discretionary spending patterns of clients in this environment that is subdued, which will be visible in FY25. If things change sometime you will have a

data, cloud migration to hyperscalers and building private AI stacks, all catalysed by GenAI are showing a good traction. Efficiency-driven programmes are being conducted in a timely-manner both in decision-making and timelines for execution.

because we've had a stellar growth for two years in financial services, significantly ahead of industry. So there will be some headwinds like some deals will transition to an offshore model. And then some deals like State Street...We have divested the JV...So that will have an impact on the revenue.

headcount is growing. And coming to FY25, of course, a lot will depend on how the year shapes up. At this point, we've planned at least 10,000 freshers to be hired during this year," he said.

platform called HCLTech AI Force. The platform helps end-to-end lifecycle of the software development and product engineering. So I think we're very well positioned," he said.

Rupee falls 10 paise to settle at 83.48 against US dollar

PTI MUMBAI

The rupee declined 10 paise to close at 83.48 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, as investors remained cautious ahead of the US Federal Reserve's monetary policy decision.



On Friday, the rupee had declined 10 paise to close at 83.38 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.26 per cent to 105.53.

macroeconomic numbers to be released this week. The Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting will begin on Tuesday and the interest rate decision is expected to be announced on May 1.

Choudhary said, adding, "USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.20 to Rs 83.70." Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, declined 0.53 per cent to USD 89.03 per barrel.

Urja Arpan conclave organised



PNS NEW DELHI

Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (Tata Power-DDL), a leading power utility supplying electricity to a populace of 7 million in North Delhi, hosted the second edition of Urja Arpan Conclave on April 24, 2024, to commemorate the World Earth Day.

Infant food formulation done on global basis, racial stereotype charges unfortunate: Nestle

PTI GURUGRAM

Nestle India Chairman & Managing Director Suresh Narayanan on Monday asserted that the company's infant food formulation for children below 18 months is done on a global basis and the allegation that "it is racially stereotyped is unfortunate" and untrue.



he said a majority of sugars present in the product are natural sugars. As per the Food Safety & Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), the permissible level of added sugar is 13.6 grams per 100 grams of feed.

International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), Nestle sold baby products with higher sugar content in less developed South Asian countries including India, and in African and Latin American nations as compared to its markets in Europe.

India Inc revenue growth weakest since September 2021: Crisil Report

PTI MUMBAI

India Inc is likely to log 4-6 per cent revenue growth in the January-March quarter of 2023-24, marking the slowest quarterly growth since recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic which began in September 2021, said a Crisil report.



monitored by CRISIL, only 12 are expected to have clocked an improvement in revenue growth both sequentially and on-year for the quarter.

products and services are expected to have led the show in the January-March quarter. Among discretionary products, the automobiles sector was steered by healthy growth in passenger vehicles on the back of higher volumes and price hikes in the past year.

weddings and rebound in corporate travel. On the other hand, it said, revenue from construction-linked sectors is expected to have grown at a tepid pace, essentially on account of a high base of the fourth quarter of fiscal 2023 that saw construction companies achieving their highest quarterly revenue.

Increasing global uncertainties may impact demand, India's exports: FIEO

PTI NEW DELHI

The escalating geopolitical tension may have implications for the country's exports in the first quarter of 2024-25 as it is likely to impact global demand, apex exporters body FIEO said. The global uncertainties caused by continuing war between Russia and Ukraine has impacted India's outbound shipments in 2023-24, which recorded a decline of 3.11 per cent to USD 437 billion.



demand slowdown," he said, adding certain advanced economies like Europe may witness more slowdown. He also said that India's domestic currency depreciated only about 1.3 per cent during 2023-24 as against Chinese Yuan's 4.8 per cent; Thai Baht 6.3 per cent and Malaysian Ringgit's 7 per cent.

When asked about the impact of Israel-Iran war, he said certain exporters from engineering sector have

funds for longer period. Exporters also need interest subvention support," Sahai said. He asked for continuation of interest equalisation scheme. On December 8, 2023, the Union Cabinet approved an additional allocation of Rs 2,500 crore for the continuation of the scheme up to June 30.

Indegene ₹1,842 crore IPO to open on May 6

PTI NEW DELHI

Indegene Ltd, a healthcare tech firm focused on the global life sciences industry, on Monday said it has fixed the price band at Rs 430 to Rs 452 per share for its Rs 1,842-crore initial share-sale offer that opens for public subscription on May 6. The initial public offering (IPO) will conclude on May 8.



THOMAS CUP

India seal quarterfinal berth with 5-0 win over England

PTI ■ CHENGDU (CHINA)

Defending champions India sailed to the knockout stage of the Thomas Cup with a 5-0 rout of England in a Group C contest here on Monday.

India, who defeated Thailand 4-1 in their opening tie, notched up a second consecutive win to qualify for the quarterfinals.

HS Prannoy returned to winning ways, defeating Harry Huang 21-15 21-15 to give India a 1-0 lead.

"To give a start to the team is really important, it gives a good boost to the team to go ahead. It is really important to finish off the matches clinically, you saw against Thailand one match was bad

for us. So it's important to finish off the matches clinically," Prannoy said after his match.

The star pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty was stretched to three games by Ben Lane and Sean Vandy in the first doubles fixtures before 2022 world champions bronze medallist picked up a 21-17 19-21 21-15 win in one hour five minutes.

Former world number one Kidambi Srikanth recorded a 21-16 21-11 victory over Nadeem Dalvi to give India an unassailable 3-0 lead.

"Happy with the way both the matches have gone for me (in the tournament). There is a lot of pressure on players to win games. I feel I have played little easier opponents so far. But

from now we will face better opponents and I have to be my best," Srikanth said.

On his recent form, Srikanth said "I'm playing well but not able to pull off the matches. Obviously people will compare how I was playing from 2021-2022. I was in my 20s then."

The second doubles pair of MR Arjun and Dhruv Kapila then brushed aside Rory Easton and Alex Green 21-17 21-19.

In the final match, 24-year-old Kiran George prevailed 21-18 21-12 over Cholan Kayan to wrap up the fixture.

India will take on group toppers and record 14-time champions Indonesia in their final group fixture on Wednesday.

Alcaraz earns another comfortable win in Madrid

AP ■ MADRID

Carlos Alcaraz continues to make a successful return from injury at the Madrid Open. The two-time defending champion cruised past Thiago Seyboth Wild in the third round on Sunday to earn another comfortable win.

Alcaraz won 6-3, 6-3 for his second straight victory in his first tournament after skipping Monte Carlo and Barcelona because of an arm injury.

"I think I played at a really good level," Alcaraz said. "Coming into this match I was nervous a little bit because I didn't know how my forearm was going to be. Thiago has big shots. He is really strong. I am really happy with the performance. It was difficult a little bit at

Arsenal and Man City both win to keep it tight at top in race for Premier League title

AP ■ LONDON

Arsenal survived a late scare at Tottenham to stay narrowly ahead in the race for the Premier League title.

A 3-2 win at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium ensured Mikel Arteta's team remained at the top of the standings, ahead of defending champion Manchester City, which won 2-0 at Nottingham Forest.

But Arsenal had to endure a nervous finish despite powering to 3-0 lead in a London derby that was supposed to be one of its biggest tests in the title chase.

"The last 20 minutes wasn't nice, but it was worth it," Arsenal forward Bukayo Saka said afterward. "We know it is a big derby and they don't want to lose 3-0 at home. Momentum shifted their way, but I am proud of the boys - we managed to get the three points."

An own-goal from Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg and further strikes from Saka and Kai Havertz put Arsenal into a commanding position at the break. But in the face of a potential rout, Tottenham responded in the second half through Cristian Romero and a penalty from Son Heung-min in the 87th minute.

Under pressure, Arsenal held on and remains one point clear at the top, having played a game more than City.

The advantage is still with Pep Guardiola's team, which will clinch a fourth-straight title if it wins its remaining games this season and responded to Arsenal's win with victory of its own at relegation-fighting Forest.

With Liverpool's title hopes

further diminishing after dropping five points in two games this week, it is down to Arsenal to challenge City's domestic dominance.

Having collapsed late on in last season's title race, Arteta's players look more capable of going the distance this time around.

An away fixture against its fiercest rival, Tottenham, was a major test of its credentials at this stage of the campaign. And while Arsenal was guilty of letting Spurs back into a game that should have been killed off much earlier, victory when tension was high was a test of character.

"Maybe last season that could have ended in a draw and we showed we have the experience," Saka said. "We know City are an amazing team, but they are not perfect, we just need to do our job."

MAN CITY WINS: Arsenal's win meant the pressure was on City to keep the heat on its title rival.

It was always favorite to beat a Forest team that is desperately fighting for survival but without Phil Foden, who was

PSG wins record extending 12th French league title

AP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain has won the French league in Kylian Mbappé's last season at the club after Monaco lost 3-2 at Lyon.

PSG has an unassailable 12-point lead over second-place Monaco, which has three games left.

The Ligue 1 triumph is PSG's third in a row and a record-extending 12th overall.

Mbappé has been involved in six of them, but comes off contract at the end of the season. He's expected to be signed by Real Madrid.

PSG is on course for a potential historic treble as it will play at Borussia Dortmund in the first leg of the Champions League semifinals on Wednesday and face Lyon in the French Cup final on May 25.

In coach Luis Enrique's first season at the club, PSG produced one of the most dominant seasons in league history with just one loss in 31 games so far.

PSG could have secured the title a day earlier but was held 3-3 by Le Havre on Saturday.

"Our fans are incredible. We were losing 1-0, 3-1, and they kept supporting us," Luis Enrique said after the draw.

"We managed to draw later on and effectively win the league thanks to the supporters, thanks to their positive attitude."

That was quite a contrast with the past couple of seasons.

Last season, PSG supporters were booing Lionel Messi even though the soccer great was the player who helped the club clinch an 11th league title by scoring in a 1-1 draw with Strasbourg.

Two years ago, there was a similar disconnect between the supporters and the club. PSG supporters kept protesting at Parc des Princes by giving their team the silent treatment.

Bayern, Dortmund seek Champions League glory



BOTH CLUBS KICK OFF BIG SUMMER OF SOCCER FOR GERMANY

The club is already planning for life without its superstar striker, who is set to walk away as a free agent, with players like Randal Kolo Muani, Ousmane Dembele and Goncalo Ramos expected to help fill the void in his absence. But Mbappé could still have a big say in the Champions League and he scored two goals in PSG's 4-1 comeback win against Barcelona in the quarterfinals.

PSG drew 3-3 at home to Le Havre on Saturday after coming back from 3-1 down and needing an equalizer from Ramos in the fifth minute of stoppage time.

It's been a strange season for Dortmund and that was underlined by Saturday's 4-1 loss against top four rival RB Leipzig.

Dortmund has certainly saved its best performances for the Champions League, none better than the comeback win over Atletico Madrid in the quarterfinals.

Striker Sebastian Haller scored in the first leg against Atletico but injured his ankle in Dortmund's next game and hasn't played since.

Forward Donyell Malen has been struggling with pain, too. Much could depend on which version of Jadon Sancho turns up to face PSG.

Sancho, who scored against Leipzig, has shown glimpses of his obvious talent since returning to Dortmund in January on loan from Manchester United. The issue is whether the former England forward can consistently play at his best.

"Both I and Jadon have noticed he isn't at the peak of his performance yet, but that's totally OK. That's something we were aware of when we decided to bring him back, but we know that he's able to reach that maximum very quickly," Dortmund coach Edin Terzic said Friday.

"Every training session, Jadon has a moment that shows his incredible talent and we see how hard-working he is with the team.



Archer Deepika Kumari reinducted into TOPS

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Another archer, Mrinal Chauhan, has been added to the TOPS Development group, while Pravin Jadhav has been moved from Development to Core group and para-powerlifter Ashok has been inducted into TOPS Core group, the sports ministry said in a statement.

The Mission Olympic Cell (MOC), during its 133rd meeting, also inducted squash players Anahat Singh, Abhay Singh and Velavan Senthilkumar to the TOPS Development group, to help them prepare for the Los Angeles Olympics, that will take place in the year 2028.

In October 2023, the LA organising committee had included squash in the 2028 edition of the Games.

"Looking at India's performance in Squash in the past two decades, especially at Commonwealth Games and Asian Games, MOC decided to induct three squash players in their TOPS Development group, with the aim to help them provide all required assistance to prepare for the global event," the ministry release stated.



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and Erling Haaland on the bench, Guardiola was without two of its big match-winners in the starting 11.

An injury to goalkeeper Ederson also forced City into a change at halftime.

But Guardiola's team looks to be unstoppable and a 2-0 win extended its unbeaten record in the league to 19 games, dating back to a 1-0 loss to Aston Villa at the start of December. Back then there were questions about City's ability to win a sixth title in seven years. While Arsenal may lead the way, City's title-winning know-how could make the difference.

So could Haaland, who stepped off the bench to score the goal that effectively killed off Forest's challenge.

Josko Gvardiol headed City in front in the first half, but Chris Wood had two clear chances from close range to score for Forest.

Haaland missed City's last two games through injury, but was quickly back on the scoresheet with a clinically taken goal just nine minutes after coming on as a substitute.

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FOCUS ON RAHUL DURING LSG, MI CLASH

PTI ■ LUCKNOW
With T20 World Cup selection round the corner, KL Rahul will have one final chance to stake claim on the second wicketkeeper's spot in the Indian team when Lucknow Super Giants host Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League here on Tuesday.



field restrictions not only to strengthen his Indian team selection prospects but also to help his side score in an excess of 200 runs, which has become a norm in this edition. LSG were handed a seven-wicket loss by Rajasthan Royals, who chased the 197-run target with six balls to spare.

match-winning totals as the race for the playoff heats. They will fancy their chances against a struggling Mumbai bowling unit which was carted all over the park by the Delhi Capitals batters the other day.

skipper Hardik Pandya were pummelled into submission. They would look to do better. Mumbai Indians find themselves in a precarious position sitting ninth on the points table.

consistent performances ahead of the World Cup. All-rounder Pandya has flopped with the bat and ball this season.

SQUADS: Mumbai Indians: Hardik Pandya (c), Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Dewald Brevis, Jasprit Bumrah, Piyush Chawla, Gerald Coetzee, Tim David, Shreyas Gopal, Ishan Kishan (wk), Anshul Kamboj, Kumar Kartikeya, Akash Madhwal, Kwenya Maphaka, Mohammad Nabi, Shams Mulani, Naman Dhir, Shivalik Sharma, Romario Shepherd, Arjun Tendulkar, Nuwan Thushara, Tilak Varma, Harvik Desai, Nehal Wadhwa, Luke Wood.

Lucknow Super Giants: Quinton de Kock, KL Rahul (c & wk), Deepak Hooda, Ayush Badoni, Marcus Stoinis, Nicholas Pooran, Krunal Pandya, Ravi Bishnoi, Mohsin Khan, Shamar Joseph, Yash Thakur, Manimaran Siddharth, Prerak Mankad, Arshad Khan, Krishnappa Gowtham, Amit Mishra, Kyle Mayers, Ashton Turner, Matt Henry, Naveen-ul-Haq, Devdutt Padikkal, Yudhvir Singh Charak, Mayank Yadav and Arshin Kulkarni.



Gaikwad is one step ahead of bowlers more often than not: Hussey

PTI ■ CHENNAI

The ability to remain one step ahead of the bowlers has allowed Ruturaj Gaikwad to flourish in this Indian Premier League, reckons CSK batting coach Michael Hussey. After an unbeaten 108 in the previous game, CSK skipper Gaikwad was on the cusp of another century on Sunday but fell two runs short of the milestone against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

batting averages in the T20 format but at CSK, that aspect of the game is not discussed much. "We don't talk about it (S/R) much at all. We talk about each player since they need to assess the conditions out in the middle as quickly as they can. The batter needs to take up the responsibility and the ownership in the middle," he continued.

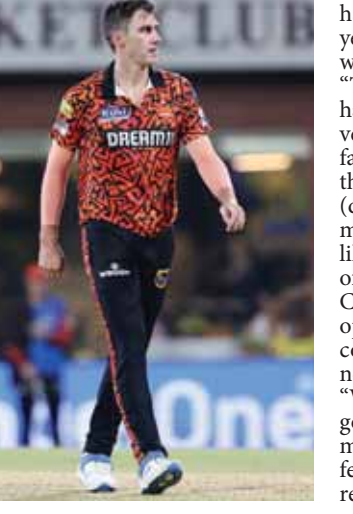
Hussey was delighted with Daryll Mitchell finally delivering for the Yellow Brigade at number three. He scored a 32-ball 52 against SRH, which also happened to be his maiden IPL half-century. "It's not easy. He's a new player who comes to the team, even Rachin Ravindra, for that matter, and we expect them to come in and fit in right away and go out and perform. But in reality, it's not that easy," he explained.

PTI ■ CHENNAI

T20 has always been a batters game and that has gone to a new level this IPL: Cummins

T20 format has always favoured the batters and that has gone to a 'whole new level' in this Indian Premier League, feels Sunrisers Hyderabad skipper Pat Cummins. The Australian gave his thoughts following SRH's 78-run loss to defending champions Chennai Super Kings here on Sunday. IPL 2024 has witnessed six 250 plus totals already with 200 no more a safe total. Prior this edition, 250 was only breached twice in the history of IPL.

around. There's not much sideways movement, and there's not much on the wicket either. "So, a lot of times, the best way to get a wicket is to try and defend. Batters are getting better at hitting the ball out and even getting confident. It challenges you as a bowler. But, if you have a big total like 270-280 and if you can go at 9.00 as a bowler and make an impact, it could be match-winning," said the Australian.



hasn't really come off yet. So yeah, it is something (we need) to work on," Cummins reckoned. "There was definitely dew there; haven't seen so much at any other venue across the country. But, we failed to make the most of it, and they bowled well as well. So, it (dew) didn't really factor in this match as much as we would have liked." Of their four losses, three of them have come chasing. Cummins said while their openers have been commendable, middle-order needs to step up.

"Different batters have stepped up throughout the tournament, and you need two or three guys to make an impact. But tonight, we never really got going, unfortunately. "I am really happy about how the boys have been going about it. Even tonight, there were not too many reckless shots." As for the struggles for the bowlers this season, Cummins felt that it could be possibly due to the wickets being drier.

OTHER SPORTS

Video reviews have changed face of European soccer

One country is holding out

As the Swedish league got underway this spring, yellow-and-black-clad supporters of Stockholm club AIK held up an enormous banner containing a long, vivid story about the dark forces of modern soccer conquering the world. "The whole world? No!" read the words on the giant display. "There was, in fact, a small area that successfully resisted the intruders, surrounded by modern football's smoldering ruins."

controlled by members — essentially, supporters — under a regulation that states members should control at least 50% of their club's shares, plus one. Although the federation initially appeared to want VAR in operation — the technology is, after all, used at European and international level — it will not go against the wishes of its member-run clubs. As a result, the federation has held off on further discussions about adopting VAR and said last week it doesn't envisage any in the foreseeable future.

imperfections. In the English Premier League, a communications mix-up between the official running the video review and the on-field referee cost Liverpool a valid goal in a loss at Tottenham in October. Weeks later, a Tottenham-Chelsea match had a total of 21 minutes of stoppage time added on largely because of a raft of video reviews. Earlier this month, Nottingham Forest put out an inflammatory statement, questioning the integrity of a match official, after being denied what it perceived to be three clear penalty shouts overlooked by the video referee.

Silva to leave Chelsea at end of season

AP ■ LONDON
Briave Chelsea at the end of the season after four years at the club. The 39-year-old Silva made the announcement on Monday, saying he is leaving the door open for a return to Chelsea "in another role." "Goodbyes are for those that leave and don't come back," he said in a message to Chelsea's fans. "I intend on coming back one day."

Chelsea has five league games left this season but is languishing in ninth place after an inconsistent campaign under first-year coach Mauricio Pochettino. Rory McIlroy and Shane Lowry rally to win Zurich Classic team event in a playoff New Orleans, Apr 29 (AP) Rory McIlroy and Shane Lowry received a standing ovation at historic, creole French Quarter restaurant Arnaud's on the eve of their final round at the Zurich Classic of New Orleans team event.



think about where we met and where we've come from, to be on this stage and do this together - really, really cool journey that we've been a part of." McIlroy, of Northern Ireland, won his 25th PGA Tour title and first of the season. Lowry, of Ireland, claimed his third PGA Tour victory. Each walked away with about \$1.29 million and 400 FedEx Cup points apiece.

Bayer Leverkusen late escapes are keeping Xabi Alonso team unbeaten this season

Just call him Xabi Houdini. Bayer Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso has seen his team pull off several scarcely believable escapes from defeat this season as it remains unbeaten across all competitions.

unbeaten record. The previous weekend, Josip Stanišić scored in the seventh minute of stoppage time for a 1-1 draw at Borussia Dortmund. And in Leverkusen's previous game, Amine Adli scored in the 90th minute for a 1-1 draw at West Ham in the Europa League.

Robert Andrich scored with the last kick of the game for a 2-2 draw with high-flying Stuttgart on Saturday. The goal came in the sixth minute of stoppage time when there was only supposed to be five. Stuttgart had won seven of its nine games since losing to Leverkusen in the German Cup and led 2-0 against Leverkusen, but even that wasn't enough of a cushion to prevent Alonso's team from coming back and extending its

the 86th. "It's not easy to explain what we did again after last week - again in the last minute," Alonso said. "There's no explanation why it happens so often, but it's good for us." Those late goals helped Leverkusen clinch the Bundesliga title ahead of 11-time defending champion Bayern Munich with five rounds to spare.

"We've already reached our main target - to be champions - but we want to keep going, we don't want to stop. There are still three games (in the Bundesliga). We want to stay unbeaten for the rest of the season," Alonso said. Leverkusen's next game is against Roma in the first leg of their Europa League semifinal on Thursday. The teams met at the same stage last season, when José Mourinho's team eliminated Alonso's thanks to a 1-0 win in Rome. They drew the second leg 0-0 in Leverkusen.



"From the first Europa League game against (Swedish team) Håcken, we spoke about our experience in Rome and now we're back in the same situation, semifinal vs Roma," Alonso said.