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PAPER WITH PASSION

Lasting ordeal

Despite the ongoing multi-pronged rescue approach, the trapped workers are still fighting for life

For nine long days and nights, the 41 construction workers trapped inside the Uttarkashi tunnel have been bereft of sunlight, a cool breeze and normal life where they can move around at will. Best efforts using the best machinery by several Government agencies notwithstanding, these men await evacuation from what used to be their workplace after the Silkyara-Barkot underconstruction tunnel suddenly collapsed on November 12. The ill-fated workers – mostly natives of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand – face the ordeal of their way out being blocked by rubble and debris. This incident has not only tested the resilience of these workers but also triggered a massive, coordinated effort to rescue them. The location of the tunnel – part of the Narendra Modi Government's 'Char Dham' all-weather accessibility project – in a remote mountainous area presents a logistical nightmare for the rescue teams. The authorities swiftly mobilised a multi-agency response to evacuate the trapped workers. Specialised teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), local police and experts from abroad have been deployed at the accident site. The rescue operation is going on for nine days now but to no avail. The initial rescue operation was suspended on November 17 when a loud cracking sound was heard from inside the tunnel during the positioning of a new pipe for the workers to walk out bypassing the rubble. The pipes were also being used to supply the workers with food, water and medicines.



Ironically, the use of heavier machinery to move the earth only aggravated the problem and led to more debris falling and clogging the planned way out. Now, in the first place, this incident should not have occurred. Though it is not the time to delve into the larger question of whether such mega projects in a fragile ecosystem should be allowed or whether the safety and security procedures were adequate, it appears certain that the lives of poor workers do not amount for much in our system. This crisis comes barely three months after 20 workers and engineers lost their lives on the Nagpur-Mumbai Samruddhi Expressway, a similar mega project, in Thane district. However, the most uplifting and positive development in this incident has been that the innate helpful nature of people came to the fore. As news of the trapped workers spread, the local community rallied together, offering support to the rescuers and workers' families. Local volunteers played a crucial role in assisting on-ground operations and providing food, shelter and moral support to those involved in rescue efforts. But the happy ending is not here yet; there are prayers in bated breath for the hapless trapped workers who are paying the price for someone else's callousness and greed.

PICTALK



Spectators attend the inauguration of the Champs Elysee Avenue for the upcoming Christmas, in Paris

Is artificial intelligence taking over the control?



KALYANI SHANKAR

Artificial intelligence has found scope for its intervention in almost all walks of life. Are we losing control and handing over our destiny to computers?

AI technology has been widely used in the current Assembly poll campaign. It includes creating songs featuring Prime Minister Narendra Modi in languages such as Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu. These songs have gone viral on the internet. Additionally, AI-powered voice cloning tools have been utilised to send personalised messages to voters and party workers.

Modi's digitally rendered songs in Telugu have gained over 2 million views. In comparison, a Tamil-language song featuring his voice has gone viral with over 2.7 million views. Additionally, a Punjabi song that features Modi's voice has gained over 17 million views. Further, Falu, an Indian-American singer, has received a Grammy nomination for her song "Abundance in Millets", featuring PM Modi.

Congress and the BJP have used AI-powered voice cloning tools. Ashok Gehlot, the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, is notable for this. Some Television channels have introduced AI TV anchors in Odisha, Kannada and Hindi.

Artificial Intelligence has transformed healthcare in India significantly. Advanced diagnosis, treatment, and patient care tools have improved medical services. A recent World Economic Forum report says that India's expenditure on AI is expected to reach \$11.78 billion by 2025. It will contribute to an addition of \$1 trillion to India's economy by 2035. Prime Minister Modi is keen on fostering further AI development in India.

All these bring us to the question of whether AI is gradually gripping the world. At the first AI Safety Summit hosted by the UK at the historic Bletchley Park on November 1, political and industry leaders discussed the risks around artificial intelligence. The focus was also on how to develop the technology safely.

About 28 countries participated, including the United Nations and the European Union. US Vice President Kamala Harris represented the US. India, represented by Minister of State Rajeev Chandrashekhar, said, "We want AI and tech to represent good-



ness, safety and trust": Rapid progress in AI is arousing fear as well as excitement. The participants ranged from doom-sayers to hopeful participants who hoped AI would save humanity. They addressed the global nature of the issue. They stressed the need for international cooperation and healthy competition. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has said he's worried about humanity losing control to computers. The role of artificial intelligence (AI) in cyberattacks was also discussed. AI can impersonate at a scale and speed never known. These could make the global financial system go haywire and threaten democracy. "We want AI and tech to represent goodness, safety and trust," said Minister of State Rajeev Chandrashekhar, who represented India. The conference was undoubtedly a good start. India is planning to host another meeting in December. As the host nation, the UK was the first to announce the formation of an official AI Safety Institute to examine the safety of emerging forms of AI. At the end of the conference, the declaration said: "The Bletchley Declaration stresses safe, responsible AI development, urges international cooperation to mitigate risks, and promotes global benefits." Google CEO Sunder Pichai



SUPPORTERS CLAIM AI IMPROVES EFFICIENCY BY AUTOMATING TASKS, ANALYSING DATA, MAKING DECISIONS, OPERATING 24/7, REDUCING ERRORS, AND ENSURING SAFETY

admitted, "Knowledge workers, writers, accountants, architects and, ironically, software engineers would face a threat to their jobs. The concern of terrorist groups using generative AI tools and the fear that AI could become uncontrollable by humans are additional worries. AI concerns will include real-time cybersecurity, supply chain efficiency, software development acceleration, and customer service automation in the coming year. AI has disadvantages, such as potential job displacement and ethical concerns, the possibility of losing human qualities like creativity and empathy, high cost and complexity, reliability issues, and dependency on technology. It cannot engage in negative thoughts or understand cause and effect. It also cannot comprehend time. On the other hand, supporters claim AI improves efficiency by automating tasks, analysing data, making decisions, operating 24/7, reducing errors, and ensuring safety. AI can be used for voter registration and verification. Politicians would benefit from using AI for predictive analysis of voter behaviours. AI can analyse social media to gauge sentiment and identify critical issues for political campaigns to tailor their messages.

Moreover, AI is crucial in maintaining election security by detecting and preventing fraud, hacking attempts, and other irregularities. It can use historical data and current events to predict election outcomes. AI-powered chatbots can inform voters about polling locations, candidate profiles, and additional crucial election-related information. This first summit successfully brought these people together on the table and discussed AI, its benefits and dangers. This summit successfully brought these world leaders together on a platform. There has yet to be an international regulatory body. Ultimately, we have to find the answer to questions like should we automate away all the jobs, including the fulfilling ones? Should we develop non-human minds that might eventually outnumber, outsmart and replace us? Is AI a dangerous or a welcome technology? Still, moving to AI will take time to happen. That is the crux of the AI issue. It is still in the nascent stage. World leaders and industry leaders must apply their minds to a regulatory system. Rogue nations must be controlled. All countries must accept the rules and regulations. (The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RESCUE OPERATION

Sir—On Sunday, district administration officials laid out the red carpet for the Union Minister of Road, Surface Transport, and Highways at Silkyara. However, the plight of the 41 workers trapped in the tunnel since November 12 shows no signs of ending soon. The union minister informed the media that all options were being explored, with horizontal drilling remaining the most viable. If the machines continued to operate smoothly, he hoped the rescue team would 'reach' the stranded workers in the next two or two-and-a-half days. While the minister spoke of using 'robots' to reach the workers, confusion arose about what 'reaching the workers' meant. Did it imply the pipe being drilled reaching them, or did it refer to rescuers or robots reaching the workers? Ambiguity also surrounded the roads built by the Border Roads Organisation, intended for transporting heavy machinery to the accident site. Although these roads are slated to be ready by Monday, details regarding the awaited machinery and its arrival remain unclear. Experts have noted the government's initial approval of a bi-lane tunnel at Silkyara with 'escape lanes,' yet the current plan appears to have abandoned these provisions. It seems the stranded workers are unlikely to see daylight until at least Tuesday. The nation fervently prays for their swift rescue.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

WE NEED A STRICT E-PHARMA POLICY

Sir—The e-pharmacy business has flourished with the rise of smartphones. With a simple mobile click, necessary medicines are promptly delivered to homes. E-pharmacy caters to medicines not readily available on the market and serves the elderly and pregnant mothers. Questions are emerging in the pharmacy industry, prompting the Delhi High Court to direct the central government to formulate the pending e-pharmacy policy over the past five years. The deadline for this policy's formulation is set within the next

World Television Day



In 1996, a German delegation boldly declared at the United Nations (UN) that "television is a rich man's medium," opposing the observance of "World Television Day" on November 21. They remained unimpressed by television's ability to captivate imaginations as effectively as radio. From JJ Thomson's

cathode ray experiments in 1887 to its primitive form in the 1920s, to its present state, television's evolution—from black and white beauty to colored marvel—is both surprising and inspiring. Surpassing radio and newspapers, the pivotal communication mediums, wasn't an easy feat. The vivid narratives of winners and losers, the distressed and saviors, politicians and governments, celebrities, and the ordinary, make television a unique medium. It encapsulates education, news, and entertainment—a compact three-in-one package. Cultural exchange, family bonding, issue resolution, and creative documentaries are its evident benefits. A cynical scholar once remarked, "I find television to be very educational. Every time somebody turns it on, I go to the other room and read a book," a sentiment that may not resonate with avid television lovers. The question they must ask themselves is, "How much is too much?"

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

HEARTBREAKING FINAL

Sir—The final for Team India cricket fans was undeniably heart-wrenching. Had at least one of the so-called 'super batsmen,' known for creating miracles and records, recognised it as a 'mega final' and demonstrated the patience not to lose their wickets carelessly, the scorecard would undoubtedly have shown a different story. Cricket is a mind game, and the more patience players exhibit, the greater the

team benefits and resilience. This was evident in the resolve of Australian batsmen, who, despite losing three quick wickets, chose to stay and fight with full of fervor. Unfortunately, for the men in blue, the leader and experienced senior players couldn't lead the team effectively, resulting in a heartbreaking loss in the final, shattering the hearts of millions of Team India cricket lovers. Nevertheless, cricket enthusiasts will always cherish beautiful memories and records of their favourite team and players. At the end of the day it is not about winning or losing but being part of a Cricket carnival, which was magnificent to watch and some of the best memories we will cherish for long time were made during the world cup 2023.

M Pradyu | Kannur

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Cricket World Cup: A spectacle of excellence

The World Cup was a rare display of talent and grit showcasing the best cricket has to offer. It would linger for long in the memory of cricket lovers

With almost 1,30,000 fans in attendance and numerous high-profile personalities from all over the world, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, Sunday, November 19, however, belonged to an indefatigable Australia. In the heart of Ahmedabad, at the magnificent Narendra Modi Stadium, history was etched, as, Australia emerged victorious in the Cricket World Cup. It was India's first defeat of the tournament after they had, in a brilliant display of finesse, won all 10 of their previous matches. Without any exaggeration, it can be said that it was one of the finest tournaments India had ever played under the captaincy of Rohit Sharma. Once again, it was Australia's cricketing legacy that continued to shine brightly in the 2023 World Cup. The leadership of the Australian captain, Pat Cummins, and the team spirit led the team through challenging encounters. Cummins' strategic acumen and strategic captaincy style proved instrumental in setting the tone for Australia's



success. The team's batting lineup, featuring seasoned players like David Warner and Steven Smith, consistently delivered impactful performances, ensuring substantial totals in crucial matches. While the outcome may not have favoured the Indian cricket team, their journey in the 2023 World Cup was marked by moments of brilliance and a never-say-die attitude. Captained by Rohit Sharma and the dynamism of the charismatic Virat Kohli, the Indian team displayed determination and captivating fans around the world. India's batting lineup boasted formidable talents, with Rohit Sharma and K L Rahul providing solid support in most matches. Sharma's elegant stroke play and Rahul's aggressive approach set the stage for the middle order to capitalise on favourable situations. Even Virat Kohli, the linchpin of the Indian batting

order, played several crucial innings, showcasing his class and composure under pressure. Further, several key moments defined the narrative of the 2023 World Cup. In a crucial group-stage encounter, India faced Australia in a high-scoring thriller. David Warner's breathtaking century and Mitchell Starc's were other moments of the match. After restricting the South Africans to 212, Australia eked its way to 215-7 to win by three wickets with 16 balls to spare in a tense atmosphere inside Eden Gardens. It was the lowest margin of victory (by wickets) at the World Cup knockout stage. Further, India showcased a batting masterclass led by Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul in their undefeated run into the knockouts, delivering a stunning hammer blow to the Netherlands. The hosts enforced a 160-run defeat, leaving the Dutch team to conclude their World Cup journey on a disappointing note. The foundation for India's commanding total of 410 for 4 was laid by the opening pair of Rohit Sharma

and Shubman Gill, who put together a solid 100-run partnership. One cannot also forget Afghanistan's remarkable journey in the World Cup that unfolded as an enthralling cricketing saga. The team's outstanding performances astounded the global cricketing community, clinching victories against formidable opponents such as Pakistan, England, and Sri Lanka. These successes carved out a historic chapter in Afghanistan's cricketing narrative, highlighting their resilience and skill on the grand stage. Afghanistan concluded their World Cup campaign with an impressive record of four victories in nine matches, marking a historic achievement for a team that had previously secured only one win in World Cup history. The eyes are now set on the 2027 World Cup scheduled to take place in South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia. Till then, the gentleman's game continues to keep us engaged. (The writer is a programme executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, views are personal)



RAJDEEP PATHAK



FIRST COLUMN

OVERCOMING GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT

Accept the truth that nothing is permanent and live in the present to overcome grief



RAVI VALLURI

He was a nonagenarian who lived a life peppered by vicissitudes. There had been high noons and some cathartic moments too. But he remained a contented person as his children and grandchildren were 'settled' in their respective fields. However, impermanence is a fact of life and he succumbed to multiple organ failure. Ill health prevented him from meeting his older brother, (a centurion himself), who had departed for his heavenly abode sometime earlier. This had rankled him considerably and he never quite recovered.

Vital prana or the subtle life force which provides human existence and energy was drained away by the mandarins of death. It is said that parents are our first teachers. Parents act as cicerone for their children, encouraging them to take baby steps into the world and to eventually make decisions and face various challenges in life.

What does one do when a dear one ceases to exist?

"Time will take care of it. If someone you love crosses over, grief overtakes you. But see it from a broader angle — we all must go one day; someone has taken an earlier flight and we must take a later flight. When you see the impermanence of everything, you will gain the strength to overcome the grief. Again, and again, you must put your attention on the impermanence of everything," says Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

Mindfulness and grief

At the core of Buddhism is the concept of mindfulness, and it is inexplicably connected with impermanence. Impermanence is a Buddhist concept that has brought comfort to several people once they lose close ones. When humans value permanence they focus towards the future rather than dwell on the present. The mind needs to be convinced about impermanence to live in the present moment.



Sages from ancient times — with enormous perspicacity — have developed palliative techniques to overcome cataclysmic situations. These include chanting mantras, listening to religious texts, meditation, pranayama, Vipassana and the rhythmic breathing technique of Sudarshan Kriya. Mindfulness can act as a centrifugal force in life; a state in which one becomes aware of the present; thoughts and feelings, various physical experiences, and the world around us. We need to accept the cardinal truth that nothing is permanent, be it a chutzpah moment or a woe-begone situation. Change is constant.

How do mindfulness and acceptance of impermanence act as a sword to combat a sense of bereavement?

There are two common ways many of us cope with grief — either one is completely subsumed by the thought and feels entrapped like a bird in a cage. Or the mind is channelled by the techniques mentioned to become robust and grapple with ill-disposed thoughts. It is aware of an alternative paradigm to move on with life despite adversity.

A question plagues the mind as to whether humans can conquer the devastation of grief in its entirety. The truth is perhaps that that does not occur. But it does help in altering the trajectory, intensity, shape, and form of the aftermath. Mindfulness and acceptance of impermanence assist in arresting the trend of obfuscation of the mind by demons of gloom. This sets in motion the acceptance of the reality of bereavement. It is said that time is a great healer to overcome grief and bereavement. Perhaps a few notches above that are performing seva (service to the society) and surrendering to the vast universe and the Almighty to combat grief.

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

BJP banking heavily on Modi guarantee



KS TOMAR

It is now crystal clear that BJP's high command and RSS have completely relied on Prime Minister, Modi's 'Charisma' to win five state polls



It is quite evident from a personal appeal made by the PM to the voters of Madhya Pradesh and the decision not to project any leader as the chief ministerial face is aimed at focusing on Modi's popularity that the BJP is relying heavily on PM's popularity to win the state elections.

Opinions are divided about the impact of victory and losses in these state polls in Nov next month. One school of thought says that if BJP is victorious in these elections then the outcome will have no impact on 2024 polls as voters' preference may not be different when it comes to electing central government. BJP lost assembly polls in the Hindi heartland in 2018 but it swept Lok Sabha polls by winning 61 out of 65 seats which included 24(25) in Rajasthan, 28(29) MP and 9(11) in Chhattisgarh and primarily owing to Modi wave and nationalistic agenda.

Modi's popularity has gone very high at the international level and he commands maximum acceptance in the eyes of electorates in India. Experts say that BJP will be armed with Hindutva which is bound to be strengthened after the inauguration of Ram Temple in January and it will be exploited to the hilt. BJP has got vast resources and RSS will use its 'well-oiled' machinery to ensure the success of the party candidates in Lok Sabha polls. BJP will try to convince about the spectacular performance of the NDA Government and the strong leadership of Modi which made it possible to abrogate Article 370 and adopt 33 per cent women reservation bill in parliament besides.

On the contrary, critics believe that if the BJP loses state polls, then it is bound to



THE BJP HIGH COMMAND SURPRISED ITS MINISTERS LIKE NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR, PRAHLAD SINGH PATEL AND FAGGAN SINGH KULASTE WHO FIGURED IN THE FIRST LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR MP POLLS

(The writer is a political analyst and senior journalist, views are personal)

give back to saffron in parliamentary polls. They say that there are predominant factors that will upset BJP's calculations. First, there will be no Pulwama and surgical strikes to create nationwide feelings of Nationalism. Second, the popularity of Congress and opposition parties were at its lowest ebb hence voters did not have an alternative to BJP. Third, Modi's 'Charisma' may not be sufficient to neutralise the nine-year Anti-incumbency of the NDA Government. Fourth, common people are facing the worst type of skyrocketing prices of essential commodities which has made their survival difficult. Fifth, youths had voted in large numbers in the country for BJP but now the unemployment problem is at its zenith which has angered this dominant section of society. The sixth, the middle class seems to be affected and responses vary from 2019. Seventh, the BJP's downward journey has been stalled by the Congress in Karnataka and AIADMK's decision to sever ties with the BJP has given a jolt in Tamil Nadu. BJP cannot ride to power without having significant seats from southern states. Finally, the opposition parties have come under the umbrella of I.N.D.I.A. This which can be attributed to their compulsion of alleged misuse of investigating agencies against them and their leaders. The chances of declaring a PM candidate seem extremely difficult but even if they

broadly agree to share seats and decide not to field candidates against each other than arithmetic of votes may make a difference in the outcome in all states in the country in 2024.

To checkmate sitting CM, Shivraj Chouhan, the BJP high command surprised its ministers like Narendra Singh Tomar, Prahlad Singh Patel and Faggan Singh Kulaste who figured in the first list of candidates for MP polls. As per party calculations, union ministers may have their influence across the state though they have yet to prove their statewide appeal amongst the people.

Experts say that the ministers or MPs hardly do micro-level management of particular constituencies which should worry them in MP. They may not have the state-level stature when compared with Chouhan who may be sulking as he has not been declared as CM candidate despite being at the helm of affairs. BJP high command and the top brass of RSS have taken a big risk by making Prime Minister, Narendra Modi as face of the party and refrained from naming chief ministerial candidates in poll-bound states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram.

Based on a different analogy, BJP has experimented with a new strategy of fielding 24 MPs and 4 union ministers in three poll-bound states including MP, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh

which reflects the saffron party's 'desperate move and resolve' to ensure victory in these states to create a better narrative for 2024 parliamentary polls. 2nd, it may be aimed at neutralising the anguish of the voters who may have to rethink when new faces (MPs and ministers) are fielded from such constituencies.

As per the outcome of Karnataka and Himachal assembly elections, Modi's all-out aggressive campaign and Hindutva did not work hence if BJP fails to oust Congress in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh and C.S. Rao's 'Bharat Rashtira Sanithi' (BRS) in Telangana besides losing MP then it may have direct bearing on 2024 parliamentary elections in 2024. But if the results go in favour of the BJP then it may have a double impact to ensure the victory of Modi for a third successive time.

Experts say that BJP's think tank might have assessed the possible impact of the Modi government's nine-year performance and welfare measures which may give weightage to the party's nominees in the elections in the state polls. BJP's 'Gujrat Model' of replacing older generation leaders yielded positive results in Uttarakhand, Goa and Tripura but it miserably failed to deliver in Karnataka. Now it will be interesting to see whether a new strategy to push union ministers and MPs into the electoral fray will work to the advantage of the party or it will backfire.

Geopolitical implications of energy transition

The transition of energy is happening at a rapid pace which will cause a paradigm shift in geopolitical power structure

The order of power in the world has been driven by the shifts in the Energy equations, history has shown. The Steam Engine Industrialisation enabled Britain to emerge as a global superpower drawing upon its readily available supply of coal. Subsequently, Fordism peaked in World War II and brought the US to the centre of global power, shifting the focus on Oil as the energy of the future of Carbon Capitalism for decades to come. Thereon the unequal distribution of fossil fuels has been central to geopolitical power equations. The sudden, escalating and preposterous scale of Climate Change induced disruptions, have posed existential threats



ISHOO RATNA SRIVASTAV



SAIRAM

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to global power equations including (1) capital losses from fossil fuel reserves being stranded, (2) losses to treasury reaped from the fossil fuel rents and most importantly (3) loss of the geopolitical power advantages due to the shift to more diffused zero-carbon energy sources such as the solar, wind and hydropower.

Also, an aspect that can't be ignored is that an energy transition entails a technology transition. The eternal zeal towards maximising power from fossil-fueled internal combustion-based systems would shift to electrification in novel ways. Take the case of the global automotive industry which has an almost 3.5% share of global GDP; its technological shift towards



EVs is bound to have a deep impact across its value chain. Also, as the R&D in the conventional energy systems slows down, the locked-in investments would starve for upgrades, particularly in countries having a dependency on technology transfer. These large-scale industry-wide shifts would put pressure

on the geopolitical equilibrium. Also, emissions-linked tariffs in global trade regimes, like the one proposed by the EU are already concerning its trade partners. The theatre of energy-critical materials like lithium, nickel, cobalt, copper and rare earth elements is already abuzz with action as nations scramble

to secure the reserves worldwide. Since the essential resources for energy transition are not necessarily a consequence of inherited natural advantage, new fault lines are emerging, pushing the global giants to reposition their competitive advantages and undermine the geo-political strengths of others to maintain their position of power in the era of Green Industrialisation. The war in Ukraine, resulting in uncertainty in gas supplies has served as a wakeup call for Europe to hasten its renewable energy transition. Japan, another developed and technologically advanced nation, has announced its intention to be a part of the power play by announcing its Hydrogen strategy that targets an annual

supply of 12 million tonnes by 2040. India too, is leading the global solar effort by playing a leadership role in the International Solar Alliance and through its recently unveiled Hydrogen strategy, it aspires to become a global electrolyser production hub.

The issues of energy security, energy poverty and climate change are central to the concept of energy transition and provide an opportunity towards the creation of a more equitable and sustainable world. For a smooth transition to a new geo-political world order the following may be the critical elements: **Equitable & Fair Transition** — Mitigation of socio-economic dislocation through compensation for stranded

carbon assets and creating opportunities for job mobility

Revival of Multilateralism — Global institutions need to collaborate more than ever to break the vested interest nexus and create incentives for rapid action

Technological Leapfrogging — Open-source technological breakthroughs can prevent the creation of newer pockets of power based on energy capabilities and create a new world order

Diffusion of power to emerging nations — Considering the future centres of global economic growth and therefore consumption of energy to be anchored in the emerging nations, their voice needs to find a central space in global power equations.

SARITA BAGS BRONZE; SHEETAL, RAKESH IN LINE FOR GOLD



PTI ■ BANGKOK
Sarita Devi won a bronze, while India is also assured of at least two silver medals with Rakesh Kumar and Sheetal Devi entering the finals of their events in the Para Asian Archery Championship here on Monday. Sarita got the better of Jyoti

Baliyan 139-135 in an all-Indian bronze playoff in the women's compound open section. Fresh from winning the Para Asian Games gold, Sheetal overcame Sarita 143-138 in an all-Indian semifinal to make the gold medal clash in the women's compound open category. Sheetal will take on Singapore's

Nur Syahidah Alim who defeated Jyoti 150-138 in the other semifinal. Rakesh assured India of another silver advancing into the men's compound open final. Rakesh pipped Yuya Oe of Japan 143-142 in the last four match. India will also be looking to add to their six quotas (four com-

ound and two recurve) for Paris Paralympics from the qualifying event that will begin here from November 23. India, however, failed to win any medal in recurve section with Tokyo Paralympic bronze medalist Harvinder Singh making a pre-quarterfinal exit. Harvinder went down 5-6 in a



Prannoy, Sen to lead Indian charge at China Masters Super 750

PTI ■ SHENZHEN
Indian shuttlers, including comeback man HS Prannoy, will eye a good show at the China Masters — the season's last BWF Super 750 event — beginning here on Tuesday, in pursuit of valuable ranking points in the race to the Paris Olympics. Prannoy, who lost in the second round at the Japan Open Super 500 after returning to action following a back injury, will once again be the top Indian name in men's singles in the competition. He will face Taiwan's Chou Tien Chen, who had defeated him in the last meeting in Japan. The world No. 17 Lakshya Sen and world No. 23 Kidambi

Srikanth, who are fighting to be inside the top 16 by April 28 next year to qualify for the Olympics, will also be in action. Following his first-round exit last week after a loss to Japan's world championships silver medalist Kodai Naroaka, Sen will hope for a better outing when he faces seventh seed Shi Yuqi of China. With just four quarterfinal finishes in the season, Srikanth has not exactly looked the part and has often been guilty of falling in a pool of error. The former world No.1 skipped the Japan Masters last week and will face fourth seed Thai Kunlavut Vitidsarn, the reigning world champion. Priyanshu Rajawat, on the other hand, will meet Japan's Kenta Nishimoto in his opener. The top seeded men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, who are riding high on the success of an unprecedented year which saw them bagging gold medal at the Asian Games, will also aim a fruitful outing. Satwik and Chirag will hope last week's first-round exit was just a blip as they take on English pair Ben Lane and Sean Vendy in their opener. In women's doubles, Gayatri Gopichand and Treasa Jolly withdrew while Panda sisters — Rutaparna and Swetaparna — will be in the fray. Aakarshi Kashyap is the only Indian competing in women's singles, taking on China's Zhang Yi Man.



Mbappé reaches 300 career goals faster than Messi or Ronaldo

AP ■ PARIS
Kylian Mbappé has scored 300 career goals faster than Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi. Former France great Thierry Henry has nothing but admiration. Mbappé achieved the feat over the weekend in a 14-0 rout of Gibraltar at the age of 24 years and 333 days. Both Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, the game's two biggest stars in the 21st century, were older when they reached the milestone. "What this kid is doing is really out of this world," said Henry, who is now in charge of leading the new generation of France's players as coach of the Under-21 team. "It's just unbelievable." Mbappé was often compared to Henry earlier in his career. Both attended France's Clairefontaine academy before playing as left wingers at Monaco, where each won the French league titles as a teenager. Mbappé then replicated another of Henry's accomplishments when he won the 2018 World Cup in his first major tournament with France. Henry won the 1998 tournament. Mbappé has also been compared with Brazil great Pelé for his precocity. But in terms of style, with his devastating speed

India seek inspiration from famous 2019 stalemate against Qatar

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR
India will take inspiration from their famous goal-less draw against Asian champions Qatar four years ago when they face the same opponents in a 2026 FIFA World Cup second round qualifiers match here on Tuesday. Their confidence boosted after the 1-0 away win against Kuwait on November 16, India will hope to give a tough fight to Qatar, though the fancied visiting side will start as firm favourites. India had surprised the football fraternity when they soaked up waves of attacks to hold Qatar 0-0 on September 10, 2019 in their 2022 World Cup second round qualifiers in Doha. Qatar were then in red-hot form, having won the Asia Cup title in early 2019. Talismanic India captain Sunil Chhetri was absent in that match as he was indisposed and



he would be eager to show his class at the Kalinga Stadium on Tuesday, though scoring chances for the hosts are expected to be far less than the visitors. Goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, who had captained the team that night in Doha in front of a partisan expatriate crowd, will have to be at his best again on Tuesday to thwart the marauding Qataris as he had done four years ago. Ranked 61 in the world, Qatar are coming off a 8-1 thrashing of Afghanistan in their earlier match in Doha on November 16, and they would be looking to make the record of the drawn game in 2019 straight with a dominating win against the 102nd-ranked India. Qatar were 1-0 victors in the reverse fixture of the two teams in the 2022 World Cup qualifiers. Star striker Almoez Ali, who struck four times against

Kings of Bangladesh last month. Kerala Blasters player Jaison suffered a shoulder injury in an Indian Super League match against Mumbai City FC and he had undergone a successful surgery early this month. Midfielder mainstay Sahal Abdul Samad and Manvir Singh, who scored the lone goal for India against Kuwait, were there in Doha four years ago and they would look to make life difficult for the Qataris, more so after the duo's good outing in Kuwait City. Stimac was just a few months into India head coach's job in the 2019 match, and after four years, he feels a positive result against Qatar is "not unfeasible." "We have analysed Qatar from every angle and position and know very well what they are capable of in terms of speed and strength. Their defensive and offensive positions are immaculate, which they demonstrated against Afghanistan by scoring

India captain Savita eyeing hat-trick of Goalkeeper-of-the-Year titles

PTI ■ BENGALURU
India captain Savita Punia remained in contention for securing a hat-trick of Goalkeeper-of-the-Year Award after she was nominated for the recognition for a third time in a row at this year's FIH Hockey Star Awards. "I never thought I would win this award for two straight years, and get nominated yet again," said Savita who had won the prestigious titles in 2021 and 2022. "I feel really great, and it's a proud moment for me, my family and my teammates as well." Savita has led the country to var-



ious important wins in recent years, including the title triumph at the inaugural FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup 2022 in Spain that helped India earn promotion to the FIH Pro League 2023-24. "When I started playing, I never thought I would come this far, and it is all due to the support of my family and my teammates. "In team sport, no achievement is based on individual efforts but is an outcome of teamwork. It's great to be recognised for your hard work, and it motivates the entire team," she added. She also led the team to the bronze medal at this year's Hangzhou Asian Games fol-



Gavi's knee injury overshadows Spain's 3-1 win against Georgia

AP ■ VALLADOLID (SPAIN)
Ferran Torres scored and had an assist for Spain in its 3-1 home win against Georgia in a European Championship qualifying game that was overshadowed by a potentially serious knee injury for midfielder Gavi. Gavi was in tears when he limped off in the 24th minute in Valladolid on Sunday. Gavi's goal for Spain in a 1-0 win at Norway in October had already secured spots for both Spain and Scotland at next year's tournament in Germany. The 19-year-old Barcelona player took a hard hit to the side of his right knee when he collided with an opponent. He kept playing for a few minutes and appeared to hurt the same leg while trying to control the ball. After that he immediately signaled to the team that he could not continue. Spain coach Luis de la Fuente embraced his young player before Gavi was taken into the locker room with team doctors. Robin Le Normand gave Spain

Amy captures her first American LPGA title

AP ■ NAPLES (US)
Amy Yang picked a lucrative time for her first LPGA title on American soil. Yang birdied her last two holes for a 6-under 66 to win the CME Group Tour Championship and claim the USD 2 million prize, matching the largest in women's golf. The victory was her fifth on the LPGA Tour, the previous four coming in Asia. Yang holed out for eagle on the 13th fairway to overcome an early three-shot deficit, and then she let Nasa Hataoka make the mistakes in crucial moments down the stretch. All 60 players who qualified for the season finale only had to win to become the Race to CME Globe champion. Yang finished in style, making a 10-foot birdie putt. The 34-year-old from South Korea dropped her putter and cupped both hands over her face as a half-dozen players charged onto the



green and soaked her with so much bubbly she wrapped a towel on her shoulders as she went to sign her card. Hataoka closed with a 69 and Alison Lee had a 66 to tie for second. Lee was never closer than two shots along the back nine at Tiburon Golf Club. Lee, still winless on the LPGA Tour, closed out her season with three runner-up finishes on the LPGA and a victory in Saudi Arabia on the Ladies European Tour. Yang trailed by three shots through six holes of the final round when she charged back into the mix with three birdies over a four-hole stretch. The pivotal shot was holing out her approach on the par-4 13th, the ball landing near the pin and then spinning back about 6 feet into the cup. Hataoka answered with a 10-foot birdie putt, and they were tied going to the final three holes. That's when Hataoka, a 24-year-old

from Japan, blinked first. Her birdie putt from the fringe ran some 6 feet by the hole, and the par putt caught the lip. That ended 35 straight holes without a bogey, and left her one shot behind. On the par-5 17th, Hataoka missed left down a steep ridge, with the pin cut to the left. She bumped her chip to 8 feet and missed the birdie chance. Yang, who also was left but short enough to hit a lofted pitch, nearly holed it and had a 3-foot birdie putt that gave her a two-shot lead going to the 18th. She never looked anything but calm, splitting the soft fairway, and not even watching the full flight of her approach that rolled out to 10 feet below the hole. Lee had four birdies over her last eight holes. Lilia Vu, a two-time major champion this year and No. 1 in the women's world ranking, closed with a 65 to finish alone in fourth and picked up a valuable prize of her own.

