

ARTICLE ALERT 1-15 JULY 2025

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1. The TV shows people risk death to watch. Economist. 5th July 2025.
In most countries, good television is cheap. A monthly Netflix subscription costs less than a takeaway pizza. In North Korea, by contrast, watching a gripping TV drama can cost you your life. Under the “Anti-Reactionary Thought Law” of 2020, no North Korean may consume, possess or distribute the “rotten ideology and culture of hostile forces”. That means K-dramas and K-pop, as well as South Korean books, drawings and photographs. The penalties range from forced labour to prison camp to death. Human-rights groups report multiple executions. In 2022 a 22-year-old farmer was executed for listening to 70 South Korean songs and watching three South Korean films, which he shared with his friends.

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2025/07/03/the-tv-shows-people-risk-death-to-watch>

2. A YouTuber kicks up a stink over a flatulent “reaction” video. Economist. 5th July 2025.
“Reaction” clips are a staple of the online world. After one person makes a viral video, others film themselves responding to it, riffing on the original with commentary, quips or funny expressions. Derivative as they may sound, such videos are big business: Khaby Lame, the most followed person on TikTok, uses the reaction format in most of his clips, which have been liked 2.5bn times.

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2025/07/01/a-youtuber-kicks-up-a-stink-over-a-flatulent-reaction-video>

3. Hollywood’s new favourite villain. Economist. 5th July 2025.
YOU CAN glean a lot about America and the world from whom Hollywood chooses as its baddies. During the cold war, the villains were often rogue Russian generals; during the war on terror, they were jihadists from the Middle East. Lately, however, Tinseltown has turned its attention to technology. It seems Hollywood’s screenwriters are “doomers” when it comes to artificial intelligence, believing it poses an existential threat to humanity.

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2025/06/30/hollywoods-new-favourite-villain>

4. Before there was Oprah’s Book Club, there was the Book Society. Economist. 5th July 2025.
These days it seems every celebrity wants to put their name to a book club: among the rich and famous, they are as common as private jets, non-disclosure agreements and Ozempic. Reese Witherspoon, an actor, wants women to read—or, to be more precise, she wants them to embrace the power of “book joy”. Oprah Winfrey, a media personality, hopes her recommendations will “spark enlightenment”. Dua Lipa, a pop star, wants people to “read the world differently”. Kaia Gerber, a model, strives to create “rage readers”. (She does not explain what those are, nor why they would be desirable.)

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2025/07/02/before-there-was-oprahs-book-club-there-was-the-book-society>

5. Stop crying your heart out—for Oasis have returned to the stage. Economist. 5th July 2025.

IT IS THE moment rock fans thought would never happen. On July 4th Oasis, the greatest British band of their generation, will go on stage for the first time in 16 years. Such a thing seemed impossible given the group's spectacular combustion in 2009, after a fight between Liam Gallagher, the lead singer, and his brother, Noel, the main songwriter. In the intervening years the siblings fired shots at each other in the press and on social media. (Noel famously described Liam as "the angriest man you'll ever meet. He's like a man with a fork in a world of soup.") But now, they claim, "The guns have fallen silent."

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2025/07/03/stop-crying-your-heart-out-for-oasis-have-returned-to-the-stage>

6. The Mesmerizing, Hard-Edge Paintings of Fanny Sanín. New Yorker. 14th July 2025.

The Colombia-born artist Fanny Sanín has lived and worked in New York since 1971, but she has never had a museum survey in the city. Unfortunately, such neglect isn't unusual for a Latin American woman, but in Sanín's case it may also be a product of her style: geometric abstraction. She makes colorful, hard-edge compositions of lines and shapes. They're the kind of paintings that had their heyday in the nineteen-sixties but haven't been in vogue since (except for the revival of another Latin American woman painter, Carmen Herrera, in the early to mid-two-thousands). Americas Society's "Fanny Sanín: Geometric Equations" (through July 26), curated by the art historian Edward J. Sullivan, is far from a full-on retrospective, but it's a great step toward bringing her mesmerizing paintings into wider view.

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/goings-on/the-mesmerizing-hard-edge-paintings-of-fanny-sanin>

7. Ready, Set, Libretto! Jesse Eisenberg Speed-Writes a Musical. New Yorker. 14th July 2025.

Jesse Eisenberg and Meredith Scardino were trying to come up with an idea for a musical, in a conference room in midtown, one recent Sunday. Inspired by a heap of props, they tossed out vague prompts. "That van Gogh vest—I was thinking about how sad van Gogh would be if he saw that," Scardino, a comedy writer who created the sitcom "Girls5Eva," said. Eisenberg, whose most recent film is "A Real Pain," yes-anded her: "Yes, like Beethoven being turned into a ringtone."

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/07/07/ready-set-libretto-jesse-eisenberg-speed-writes-a-musical>

8. The TV Dinner Goes MAHA. New Yorker. 14th July 2025.

Given the alternatives—farm to table, app to front door—can the microwavable meal compete? Since debuting in March, a company called Crave New World has been hawking its next-gen TV dinners on college campuses, even brokering a deal with fraternities and sororities: free food to fuel a social-media competition (the prize: tickets to the N.C.A.A. Final Four).

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/07/07/the-tv-dinner-goes-maha>

9. **Curtain Up at the New Delacorte.** New Yorker.14th July 2025.
In the nineteen-fifties, Joe Papp, the founder of the Public Theatre, would travel the five boroughs with a flatbed trailer hitched to a garbage truck, offering free Shakespeare to all New Yorkers. “The myth, which is sort of true, is that the truck broke down by the side of the Turtle Pond, so he just decided to squat here,” Oskar Eustis, Papp’s modern-day successor, said one afternoon in Central Park. He was standing on the site where, in 1962, Papp—after a multiyear standoff with Robert Moses (who dismissed him as “an irresponsible Commie”)—inaugurated the Delacorte, the open-air home of Shakespeare in the Park, with “The Merchant of Venice.”

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/07/07/curtain-up-at-the-new-delacorte>

10. **An Artist’s View of the Riches of New York City.** New Yorker.14th July 2025.
I first came to New York when I was twenty-four. I didn’t know anybody, which was scary, but that came with a perk: the city belonged to me alone. I soon discovered that drawing was a useless medium to reproduce its dizzying level of detail. But here’s what I found drawing can do: it can convey the rhythm and texture of New York. It can capture the disorienting, intoxicating experience of stepping out of Grand Central Terminal, or of being in downtown Brooklyn on a dark, hard February day, or of walking through the Lower East Side with dozens of layers of the city’s history visible simultaneously.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/07/07/an-artists-view-of-the-riches-of-new-york-city>

11. **The Met’s Luminous New Rockefeller Wing Still Casts Some Shadows.** New Yorker.14th July 2025.
The recent reopening of the Metropolitan Museum’s Michael C. Rockefeller Wing—a spectacular treasury of art from Africa, Oceania, and the Americas—was fortuitously timed. The renovation, which cost seventy million dollars, began in 2021, as a global campaign to decolonize Western museums was prompting some institutions to repatriate looted objects, and others to engage in tortured self-critique. Four years later, an America-first cultural crackdown has freed the Met to cast off the hair shirt of reckoning and celebrate its diverse holdings in a spirit of defiance. Tahitian dancers and Senegalese drummers performed at a festival to mark the reopening, spilling out onto the plaza on Fifth Avenue.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/07/07/the-mets-luminous-new-rockefeller-wing-still-casts-some-shadows>

BIOGRAPHY

12. **John Robbins had serious doubts about the family business.** Economist. 5th July 2025.
What could be nicer, as the mercury climbs, than eating ice cream? First, the anticipation, weighing up pistachio versus hazelnut, or praline beside salted caramel, assessing the gooiness or chunkiness of each, before the pleasingly heavy cone is put into your hand. Then that first freezing, caressing tongue-feel, the plunge of the lips into a pure indulgence of creaminess, chocolate

swirls, soft biscuit pieces and whatever else you asked for, cooling and satisfying all at once.

<https://www.economist.com/obituary/2025/07/03/john-robbins-had-serious-doubts-about-the-family-business>

13. The 'Key' to Love, Life, and Longing. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025.

Sixteen-year-old head prefect Mira (played by Preeti Panigrahi) goes to a premier, chilly Himalayan boarding school and doesn't like to "bullshit." She abides by the school uniform code, complies with assembly decorum, tops class tests, tutors her roommate, and is unmistakably the teacher's pet. We expect trouble when the rule-following poster girl is drawn towards the affable new boy, Srinivasan (Kesav Binoy Kiron). Trouble could, predictably, brew from close quarters—Mira's mother, Anila (Kani Kusruti), a peppy, middle-aged woman in vibrant skirts who loves cooking and dancing. We brace ourselves for Anila's unyielding parental power as it readies to stifle the youthful romance blooming furtively between Mira and Sri. Unexpectedly enough, it doesn't quite ensue. Instead, trouble takes a curious form. Anila fawns over Sri with unadulterated affection as she indulgently welcomes him into her house. We are caught off guard and left wondering: What just happened?

<http://epw.in/journal/2025/26-27/postscript/key-love-life-and-longing.html>

14. Ottessa Moshfegh on Harold Brodkey's "The State of Grace". New Yorker. 14th July 2025.

I first discovered Harold Brodkey's 1954 story "The State of Grace" in 2013, and I've probably read it a hundred times since. It remains, for me, one of the most charming and strangely affirming depictions of a budding artistic consciousness in fiction. In the simplest terms, it's the story of a man recounting select dramas from his adolescence. The grownup narrator never identifies himself as a writer, but the prose is so calibrated—lyrical, emotional, intentional—that the story is easy to mistake for memoir. Perhaps it's safe to assume that "The State of Grace" was based on Brodkey's own adolescence, in suburban St. Louis in the nineteen-forties. The terrain of the narrator's childhood seems to have calcified into mythology.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/takes/ottessa-moshfegh-on-harold-brodkeys-the-state-of-grace>

BUSINESS

15. How A-listers are shaking up the consumer-goods business. Economist. 5th July 2025.

Celebrities ARE venturing beyond the billboard and the big screen—and into big business. Hailey Bieber, a model married to Justin, recently sold Rhode, her make-up brand, in a deal valued at as much as \$1bn. Skims, a shapewear label founded by Kim Kardashian, a reality-TV star, makes \$1bn in annual sales and is expected to list on the stockmarket soon. Rihanna is now a billionaire not directly because of her music, but thanks to Fenty Beauty, her make-up label. Ryan Reynolds, a Hollywood actor, is active in everything from telecoms to online privacy. Surprisingly, many of these

superstar businesses have become a source of innovative new consumer products.

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2025/07/03/how-a-listers-are-shaking-up-the-consumer-goods-business>

16. Kim Kardashian, Ryan Reynolds and the age of the celebrity brand. Economist. 5th July 2025.

Kim Kardashian launched Skims, her shapewear brand, in 2019 after spending years dabbling other undergarments with teabags to “nail the perfect nude shade”. “It’s deeply personal to me,” says the reality-television star. It has also been tremendously lucrative. Skims now makes some \$1bn in sales a year.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2025/07/03/kim-kardashian-ryan-reynolds-and-the-age-of-the-celebrity-brand>

17. Are startup founders different? Economist. 5th July 2025.

When you think about your next career move, you may well have your sights set on a higher salary, a new skill or just a shorter commute. When Salar al Khafaji, a Dutch entrepreneur, was thinking about his next venture, he had slightly different criteria. Mr al Khafaji had already founded a data-visualisation startup and spent time working at Palantir, after the Silicon Valley tech firm had bought that business. For his next act he wanted to work on a chunkier challenge, something big enough to show up in GDP statistics. His choice was construction, a huge industry with a long-standing productivity problem. The upshot was Monumental, a bricklaying-robotics firm co-founded by Mr al Khafaji that is profiled in our latest Boss Class podcast.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2025/06/30/are-startup-founders-different>

18. Jeff Bezos 2.0: new wife, newish job, old vision. Economist. 5th July 2025.

JEFF BEZOS lives by a simple precept: limit the number of things you would wish you had done differently when you are 80. He calls it, with habitual nerdiness, the “regret-minimisation framework”. In 1994 it led him to forsake cushy work at a hedge fund to start Amazon. It is behind the big bets, from the Prime subscription service to AWS cloud computing, that have made the company into a technology titan valued at \$2.3trn—and himself into one of the world’s richest people. It also explains why six years ago Mr Bezos left his first wife of 25 years for a former TV presenter, Lauren Sánchez. And why he blew, on some estimates, \$50m to rent out Venice for three days for their opulent nuptials starting on June 26th—the predictable antiplutocrat pushback be damned.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2025/07/03/jeff-bezos-20-new-wife-newish-job-old-vision>

ECONOMICS

19. Why all Indians are rule-breakers. Economist. 5th July 2025.

IF YOU HAVE ever relaxed with a cold Kingfisher beer at the end of a long, sweaty day in Mumbai, the party capital of India, you have almost certainly broken the law. Specifically, you violated section 40 of the Bombay Prohibition Act of 1949, under which you must hold a permit to drink booze. A first offence is punishable by a fine of 10,000 rupees (\$115) and up to six months in prison.

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2025/07/03/why-all-indians-are-rule-breakers>

20. China's growth targets cause headaches—even when met. Economist. 5th July 2025.

WHEN CHINA'S prime minister, Li Qiang, announced in March that the country's GDP growth target for the year would be "around 5%", the number seemed ambitious. After President Donald Trump announced his tariffs in April, the target seemed almost fanciful. Yet China's economy has done surprisingly well so far this year. Exports have continued to grow and, despite low consumer confidence, retail sales have picked up. A manufacturing index published by Caixin, a business magazine, jumped to 50.4 in June from 48.3 the month before. "We are confident and capable of maintaining relatively rapid growth," Mr Li trilled at the World Economic Forum's recent meeting in Tianjin. Citigroup, an American bank, just raised its 2025 growth forecast from 4.2% in early April to 5%—bang in line with officialdom.

<https://www.economist.com/china/2025/07/03/chinas-growth-targets-cause-headaches-even-when-met>

21. Should cities run their own supermarkets? Economist. 5th July 2025.

Many a New Yorker dreams of not paying rent. So do New York's shops; retail space there is pricier than anywhere else in America, by a lot. Seldom is this wish granted. But for a select few publicly owned grocery stores, Zohran Mamdani, the Democratic nominee for New York City mayor, hopes to do just that. Alongside more typical left-wing fare, like rent controls and free buses, he pitched a more novel idea: a "public option" for groceries in the form of a state-run rival that would undercut existing supermarkets.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2025/06/30/should-cities-run-their-own-supermarkets>

22. Labour is bungling its growth "mission". Economist. 5th July 2025.

One of Britain's few growth industries of the past few years has been the study of why the economy isn't growing. Analysts have produced forests of papers about the problem. Few economic maladies have been so exhaustively examined.

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2025/07/03/labour-is-bungling-its-growth-mission>

23. Measuring Sir Keir Starmer by what people actually care about. Economist. 5th July 2025.

The LABOUR government has a confusing set of foundations, missions and milestones. Might other targets do a better job of tracking its progress in the eyes of voters? The Economist has worked with More In Common, a polling

firm, to find out. First we ran a focus group with eight Labour voters to discuss what they thought about the government's six priorities: raising living standards in every part of the Britain; building 1.5m homes; ending backlogs for specialist health care; 13,000 extra bobbies on the beat; 75% of five-year-olds "ready to learn" when they begin school; and putting Britain on track for 95% clean power by 2030. Few could recall any of these milestones and nearly all thought they were too abstract.

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2025/07/03/measuring-sir-keir-starmer-by-what-people-actually-care-about>

24. Putin's radioactive chokehold on the world. Economist. 5th July 2025.

DURING THE brief war between Israel and Iran, the world's attention was focused on Iran's nuclear programme. Yet out of the spotlight another geopolitical struggle is being waged—over the international trade in nuclear technology and enriched uranium. Though far less explosive than the situation in the Islamic Republic, the stakes involved are nonetheless high.

<https://www.economist.com/international/2025/07/03/putins-radioactive-chokehold-on-the-world>

25. A Wall Street wheeze makes a surprising comeback. Economist. 5th July 2025.

THE Special-purpose acquisition company (SPAC) was Wall Street's favourite get-rich-quick scheme during the pandemic. First, some big-shot investor raises capital by listing a shell company on the stockmarket. The big shot then calls around other big shots, looking for a moonshot. When a captivating private company is found, it merges with the shell, whose investors choose either to redeem their shares or own part of the resulting business. SPACs can be a wheeze for the sponsors who set them up (in return for a cut) and the investment bankers who advise them, but have tended to be less good for investors who pay these costs.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2025/07/02/a-wall-street-wheeze-makes-a-surprising-comeback>

26. Would you pay \$19 for a strawberry? Economist. 5th July 2025.

SIX LARGE strawberries are neatly wrapped in what looks like a fancy chocolate box. The Omakase berries—a Japanese variety, grown by a company called Oishii in New Jersey—are softer and sweeter than those found in most supermarkets. You would hope so: they cost around \$14 a box, roughly three times the price of a punnet at Walmart.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2025/07/03/would-you-pay-19-for-a-strawberry>

27. Xi Jinping wages war on price wars. Economist. 5th July 2025.

When firms raise prices, "gouging" their customers, many governments complain. Some cannot resist intervening. But in today's China, the opposite is happening. In May the state reprimanded carmakers not for raising prices, but for cutting them. "There are no winners in this price war," it said, blithely ignoring the happy customers who can now buy a zippy electric car for less than \$8,000.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2025/06/30/xi-jinping-wages-war-on-price-wars>

28. How to strike a trade deal with Donald Trump. Economist. 5th July 2025.
Another agreement, another personal triumph. "It is my Great Honor to announce that I have just made a Trade Deal with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam," President Donald Trump wrote on July 2nd. "Dealing with General Secretary To Lam, which I did personally, was an absolute pleasure." The deal showed countries were caving in to his threats, he said.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2025/07/03/how-to-strike-a-trade-deal-with-donald-trump>

29. Big, beautiful budgets: not just an American problem. Economist. 5th July 2025.

LAST YEAR America ran a budget deficit of 7% of GDP. It may soon be even bigger. President Donald Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill Act, working its way through Congress, permanently extends tax cuts introduced in 2017, offers more to hospitality workers and old folk, and boosts payments to poor children. The proposed legislation amounts to trillions of dollars of extra borrowing over the next decade.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2025/06/29/big-beautiful-budgets-not-just-an-american-problem>

30. Can Trump end America's \$1.8trn student-debt nightmare?. Economist. 5th July 2025.

In recent years, America's student-loan policy has come to resemble an alphabet soup. During the covid-19 pandemic, relief came from the CARES, ARPA and HEROES acts. Repayment plans ranged from the appropriately named (SAVE and PAYE) to the less so (PSLF and TEPSLF); even seasoned bureaucrats at the FSA will have struggled to keep track. As a result of these various policies, some \$189bn in student debt was forgiven and more than \$260bn of payments waived.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2025/07/01/can-trump-end-americas-18trn-student-debt-nightmare>

31. Vanguard will soon crush fees for even more investors. Economist. 5th July 2025.

The town of Malvern is a 45-minute drive north-west of Philadelphia. It has a population of 3,400 or so, and was the site of a minor drubbing for George Washington's continental army in 1777. It is, in many ways, a fairly unremarkable, affluent corner of the American north-east. But Malvern stands out in one way: it is home to \$10trn in assets under management.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2025/07/03/vanguard-will-soon-crush-fees-for-even-more-investors>

32. Inside Iran's war economy. Economist. 5th July 2025.

Even before the bombs began to fall, Iran's economy was in a bad way. Six in ten working-age people were unemployed. Prices had risen by 35% in the past year. Some 18% of the population was living below the World Bank's poverty threshold. Despite exporting gas and oil, Iranian officials had to burn mazut, a low-grade refining byproduct, to keep the lights on. Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's leader, then went after economic targets. Amid attacks on military bases and nuclear facilities, Israeli planes bombed at least two gas fields, a few oil fields and a car factory.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2025/07/03/inside-irans-war-economy>

33. India's Licence Raj offers America important lessons. Economist. 5th July 2025.

Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, and Donald Trump, America's president, do not share many similarities. Nehru was an erudite product of Harrow School and Trinity College, Cambridge; Donald Trump, for all his expensive education, is ultimately a rough-and-tumble graduate of New York real estate. A freedom fighter before becoming prime minister, Nehru spent nine years in British-run jails having campaigned against imperial rule; Mr Trump's tangles with the law have involved hush money for a porn star. Nevertheless, Nehru's Fabian socialism—a patrician distrust of commerce mixed with an intellectual love of scientific progress—means his views on trade are, many years later, mirrored by Mr Trump's America-first instincts.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2025/07/02/indias-licence-raj-offers-america-important-lessons>

34. Credit Growth or NIM. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025.

The Indian banking sector witnessed an acceleration in credit, compared to deposits, in financial year (FY) 2023–24. The loan portfolio of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) increased by 20.6%, while deposits rose only by 13.5%.¹ As a result, the credit-deposit (C-D) ratio went up from 75.79% at March-end 2023 to 78.07% at March-end 2024. In this article, we provide a snapshot of the challenges faced by Indian banks during the tight money regime between March 2022 and March 2024. We present a case study on how banks try to strike a balance between multiple objectives—credit growth and net interest income (NII) management—to protect their net interest margins (NIMs). We examine how the spike in bank credit, vis-à-vis deposits, has affected the NIM and the balance sheet composition of public and private sector banks, in FY 2023–24. These institutions contribute to more than 95% of banking sector assets and liabilities in India. In particular, we elicit the portfolio risks which may arise when banks respond to a potential squeeze on NIM.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/26-27/commentary/credit-growth-or-nim.html>

35. The Rise of the Gig Economy: Unlocking Opportunities for Graduates. University News. Vol.63, No.27. 7-13th July 2025. Page No. 23-33.

The World of work is undergoing a radical transformation, and at the heart of this change is the gig economy, a dynamic and rapidly growing sector that is redefining employment models across the globe. A big economy, also known as the sharing economy or access economy, relies heavily on temporary and part-time positions filled by independent contracts and freelancers rather than full-time permanent employees.

36. The Mamdani Campaign for an Affordable New York. Indian Forum. 1st July 2025.

For many of us, New York City is still the ultimate city. In the 20th century NYC defined a new type of urban existence – the staggering verticality, the extraordinary mixing of people from all over the world, the extremes of capitalist wealth and dynamism. Still today, compared to sprawling megacities like Mexico City or Shanghai, NYC remains a compact urban space. Its overlapping layers of architectural and infrastructural history, offer

a 'classic' experience of dense modernity, including unkempt dereliction, filth and infestation with rats. If you live in NYC you have a visceral sense of how plagues happen, and riots. Anyone who has lived there knows that the city seems to experience moments where huge masses of people seem to vibrate in synch. With powerful universities and media, it is an intellectually, culturally, and politically vibrant place, capable of generating huge intensity of debate and true surprises.

<https://www.theindiaforum.in/economy/mamdani-campaign-affordable-new-york>

EDUCATION

37. A quiet education revolution in England's secondary cities. Economist. 5th July 2025.

England's teenagers are in limbo. They have sat their gcse exams, which most take at 16, and will receive the results on August 21st. If they are nervous, they should be. Good gcse grades open doors to colleges and universities, whereas bad grades shut them. But teenagers in big cities should worry less. They are likely to do better than their peers elsewhere, and better than their predecessors.

<http://economist.com/britain/2025/07/03/a-quiet-education-revolution-in-englands-secondary-cities>

38. Building Bridges through Bilingual Textbooks in India: A Suggestion for the Schooling System and Higher Education. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025.

Indian education has been plagued by the binary of teaching in English medium or local languages. Bilingual textbooks would leave teachers and students free to choose the mix that suits them, going at their own pace and concentrating on understanding the lessons. Training a cadre of efficient translators and utilising machine translation shall help this effort.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/26-27/alternative-standpoint/building-bridges-through-bilingual-textbooks-india.html>

39. A Decade of Growth in Higher Education in Telangana. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025.

Despite poor performance in literacy, Telangana has made impressive growth in higher education. However, the system is plagued with a few serious problems in terms of uneven growth, poor quality of higher education, the predominance of the private sector, too many small and mono-disciplinary institutions, etc. Drawing on the National Education Policy 2020, the paper suggests a few measures for restructuring and reforming higher education in the state.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/26-27/special-articles/decade-growth-higher-education-telangana.html>

40. Digitization of Higher Education and Global Gross Enrolment Ratio: The Present Scenario. University News. Vol.63, No.27. 7-13th July 2025. Page No.3-6.

Bharat is a developing country with the densest population compared to developed countries in the globe as the United States of America (USA). The

population and workforce of the country play a crucial role in its development. The economy of any country depends on its natural resources and its demand, how it has to be managed, utilized and fulfil the other countries' requirements.

41. Global Competencies: The Integrated Learning Model of the Dayalbagh Educational Institute. University News. Vol.63, No-27. 7-13th July 2025. Page No.7-16.

Today's competitive world offers new opportunities every day, and a holistic education is the most effective way of preparing individuals to utilize the emerging opportunities. The Dayalbagh Educational Institute (Deemed-to-be University) has pioneered a holistic startup model for excellence. Value-based education and skill development. The study examines Dayalbagh Educational Institute's (Deemed-to-be University) creative approach, its impact on student growth, and key programs that foster global competencies, enabling the development of socially conscious individuals who can address today's global issues inclusively and sustainably.

42. What Happens After A.I. Destroys College Writing? New Yorker.14th July 2025.

On a blustery spring Thursday, just after midterms, I went out for noodles with Alex and Eugene, two undergraduates at New York University, to talk about how they use artificial intelligence in their schoolwork. When I first met Alex, last year, he was interested in a career in the arts, and he devoted a lot of his free time to photo shoots with his friends. But he had recently decided on a more practical path: he wanted to become a C.P.A. His Thursdays were busy, and he had forty-five minutes until a study session for an accounting class. He stowed his skateboard under a bench in the restaurant and shook his laptop out of his bag, connecting to the internet before we sat down.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/07/07/the-end-of-the-english-paper>

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

43. China is building an entire empire on data. Economist. 5th July 2025.

CHINA'S 1.1BN internet users churn out more data than anyone else on Earth. So does the country's vast network of facial-recognition cameras. As autonomous cars speed down roads and flying ones criss-cross the skies, the quality and value of the information flowing from emerging technologies will soar. Yet the volume of data is not the only thing setting China apart. The government is also embedding data management into the economy and national security. That has implications for China, and holds lessons for democracies.

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2025/07/03/china-is-building-an-entire-empire-on-data>

44. This is Europe's Manhattan Project moment, argues a tech boss. Economist. 5th July 2025.

LEADERS OF NATO countries are preparing for tectonic shifts in geopolitics and technology. For European allies, this should be a turning point—when they reset their defence posture to shape, rather than react to, the future of warfare. But only through marrying increases in defence spending with

leadership in cutting-edge technologies can Europe achieve the “industrial renaissance” called for by NATO’s secretary-general.

<https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2025/06/26/this-is-europes-manhattan-project-moment-argues-a-tech-boss>

45. China’s giant new gamble with digital IDs. Economist. 5th July 2025.

IT WAS IN 1984, of course, that police stations in China started issuing national ID cards to those over the age of 16. Citizens still need them to travel, pay taxes or gain access to public services. Now the Communist Party wants to take the next step. On July 15th the government will launch “digital IDs” for use on the internet, shifting responsibility for online verification from private firms to the government. This is a potentially huge change in the state’s control over data. It augments China’s radically different approach to managing and surveilling the digital lives of its citizens. And it may alter who captures the profits generated from the online economy and even affect the evolution of artificial intelligence (AI) in China.

<https://www.economist.com/china/2025/07/01/chinas-giant-new-gamble-with-digital-ids>

46. Superstar coders are raking it in. Others, not so much. Economist. 5th July 2025.

Lucas Beyer is not a celebrity. But in Silicon Valley’s rarefied world of machine-learning talent, he is seen as one. A former researcher at OpenAI, Mr Beyer announced last month that he was leaving the artificial-intelligence (AI) lab behind ChatGPT to join Meta, a social-media giant with big AI ambitions of its own. With rumours swirling that Mark Zuckerberg, Meta’s boss, was offering packages worth \$100m to poach AI whizzes, Mr Beyer clarified that he had not secured a nine-figure deal. That he needed to say so at all reflects the extent of the frenzy.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2025/07/01/superstar-coders-are-raking-it-in-others-not-so-much>

47. Ferrari is looking less like a carmaker and more like Hermès. Economist. 5th July 2025.

The workaday town of Maranello, near such architectural jewels as Bologna and Modena, shares little of their charm. Nevertheless, its main attraction is a centrepiece of Italian culture. A statue of a prancing horse on a roundabout reminds visitors that this is the home of Ferrari. Italian design, exclusivity and racing heritage have made the company both a champion of the car industry and something altogether different.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2025/07/02/ferrari-is-looking-less-like-a-carmaker-and-more-like-hermes>

48. AI is helping to design proteins from scratch. Economist. 5th July 2025.

Making biofuels is messy, inefficient and expensive. Vast quantities of crops such as maize and soyabeans must be grown, harvested and processed before their energy, accumulated slowly through natural photosynthesis, can be put to use. Nate Ennist of the Institute for Protein Design (IPD) at the University of Washington, in Seattle, thinks that synthetic proteins can boost the rate of return.

<https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2025/07/02/ai-is-helping-to-design-proteins-from-scratch>

49. Park, Alice

AI helped a couple get pregnant after 19 years. TIME. Vol. 206, No 1-2. 7th July 2025. Page No-11.

Doctors at Columbia University fertility center have reported the first pregnancy using a new AI system, in a couple who had tried to conceive for nearly two decades. The pregnancy was possible because of an advance developed by Dr. Zev Williams, director of the center, to address azoospermia, or a lack of detectable sperm in semen. About 40% of infertility in the U.S. is due to a male-related issue, and azoospermia is responsible for about 10% of those cases.

50. What India's AI Moment Must Learn from Its Own Past. India Forum. 6th July 2025.

In the early 1990s, my father ran a photography studio in Seoni, a small town in Madhya Pradesh. During festival season, he would hang a giant flashbulb outside the shop. Every few minutes, it would go off, lighting up the street and catching the eye of every passerby. That single flash, both functional and symbolic, reflected a deeper truth—technology, when harnessed with ingenuity, can be a tool not just for business but for identity and upward mobility.

<https://www.theindiaforum.in/science-and-technology/what-indias-ai-moment-must-learn-its-own-past>

ENVIRONMENT

51. Britain is already a hot country. It should act like it. Economist. 5th July 2025. Stepping off the 9.10 from London Victoria to Whitstable was akin to disembarking from a Ryanair flight in Alicante rather than a former oyster port in Kent. A little before midday, the temperature was creeping towards 30 °C. As a wall of heat hit her face, one pensioner despaired: "It's unBritish."

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2025/07/03/britain-is-already-a-hot-country-it-should-act-like-it>

52. 'We are a unprepared for extreme temperatures'. TIME. Vol. 206, No 1-2. 7th July 2025. Page No. 4.

Experts predict this summer might be hotter than average – and the U.S. is not prepared to meet the challenge, Much of the Midwest and Northeast is forecast to see temperatures "Persistently above average," according to a weather Channel prediction, while the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Prediction Center estimates that the entire country will see above- normal temperatures- the only difference being in severity.

HEALTH

53. An infestation of ticks menaces Istanbul. Economist. 5th July 2025.

First came the stink bugs, threatening the hazelnut harvest and offending the olfactory senses. Then came the Asian tiger mosquitoes, aggressive biters that can carry viruses including Zika and West Nile. The latest infestation to befall Istanbul is ticks, which have swarmed some

neighbourhoods of Turkey's biggest city and sent nearly 8,000 people to hospital with bites so far this year. Thirteen people have died.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2025/07/03/an-infestation-of-ticks-menaces-istanbul>

54. Feeding the Urban Poorest. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025.

While India's score improved slightly in the Global Hunger Report 2024, both the rate of improvement and the ranking among developing countries suggest a concerning situation of food and nutrition security in the country (Weimer et al 2024). Progress is particularly hindered by persisting inequalities and the marginalisation of specific population subgroups. The 19th High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE 2024) report highlights that a higher proportion of the rural population is undernourished and food-insecure than its urban counterpart. However, the HLPE also provides an indication that the comparison of rural and urban averages masks diversity existing within urban-rural areas, especially in large metro-cities, which are home to nearly 42% of the urban population—a phenomenon also known as the “metropolisation of urbanisation” (Goli et al 2011). This number would have become much larger now, estimates of which are unavailable due to the delay in the census.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/26-27/commentary/feeding-urban-poorest.html>

55. The ASHA Conundrum. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025.

The accredited social health activists (ASHAs) play a pivotal role in India's healthcare system, serving as front-line workers who facilitate the health-related needs of women and children facing difficulties in accessing health services (National Health Mission 2024). They also provide invaluable support to anganwadi workers in fulfilling their responsibilities (National Health Mission 2024). Despite their indispensable contributions, ASHAs have long been denied adequate social security benefits and have been subjected to government insensitivity. The appointment, roles, responsibilities, remuneration, pension, and insurance of ASHA workers are adversely affected by the practice of “scheme-structuring,” which denies them the status of employees (Singh 2024). Consequently, they are rendered ineligible for benefits under the existing social security legislations. Each state in India has its own scheme for ASHAs, which determines the type and scope of social security benefits accorded to them.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/26-27/commentary/asha-conundrum.html>

56. Informal Work and Child Health in Assam. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025.

Logistic regression is employed to analyse determinants with variables including maternal and environmental factors. The study found that the global infant mortality rate has substantially declined from 53.80 to 26.05 deaths per thousand live births from 2000 to 2023. While developing nations show gradual declines, significant disparities persist. In India, Assam records higher infant mortality rates, particularly in rural areas. Logistic regression highlights maternal care, environmental factors, income, family structure, and distance to hospitals as significant determinants. Improving these factors could mitigate infant mortality among informal workers in Assam.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/26-27/special-articles/informal-work-and-child-health-assam.html>

57. The WHO Pandemic Agreement and India's Path Forward. India Forum. 1st July 2025.

At the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA) held last month in Geneva, member states of the World Health Organization (WHO) adopted a pivotal new treaty in the collective pursuit of a safer and more equitable world. The WHO Pandemic Agreement marks a historic milestone for global health security. In this piece, we reflect on its significance, the complex dialogues that shaped it, its specific implications for India, and the next steps that will determine its success.

<https://www.theindiaforum.in/health/who-pandemic-agreement-and-indias-path-forward>

58. Mucormycosis: Lessons for a Diabetic Society. India Forum 2nd July 2025.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, a rare, fungal infection called mucormycosis exploded across India. Fungi are not common human pathogens. However, complex factors have been driving up mucor infections, especially in India and China, over the decade. While the global incidence of mucormycosis was around 1.7 cases per million population before 2020, India's incidence rate was around 140 cases per million population. This was about 80 times higher than the prevalence in developed countries, but the disease burden handled by the country's health systems made mucor infections a rare disease.

<https://www.theindiaforum.in/health/mucormycosis-lessons-diabetic-society>

59. The WHO Pandemic Agreement: Why We Need It. India Forum. 2nd July 2025.

On 20 May 2025, the World Health Assembly (WHA), which is the world's highest health policy setting body that includes health ministers of all member states of the World Health Organization (WHO), formally adopted the WHO Pandemic Agreement. Discussions on a Pandemic Agreement were initiated at the WHO in May 2021 to correct the inequities that emerged during the Covid-19 pandemic and must be addressed for the future. The pandemic saw over 700 million confirmed cases and 7 million reported deaths, both likely to be underestimates, caused by a virus that went around the globe, mutated frequently, and has now become endemic. About 400 million people worldwide have experienced Long Covid, a multisystem disorder that can often be debilitating, and which is estimated to yield annual losses of approximately \$1 trillion – equivalent to about 1% of the global economy (Al-Aly et. al. 2024)

<https://www.theindiaforum.in/health/who-pandemic-agreement-who-needs-it>

HISTORY

60. The truth and sanity of American History. TIME. Vol. 206, No 1-2. 7th July 2025. Page No-20-21.

I am a History professor at one of the Universities under attack by the Trump Administration. I am also a flag-waving patriot with an abiding love of the U.S. Those two statements might seem surprising, or contradictory. If you do not know what has happened to the teaching and writing of American history in the past 50 years.

61. Finding a Family of Boys. New Yorker. 14th July 2025.

In 1981, I was a student of art history at Columbia University. I was twenty-one and worked to support myself at a variety of jobs. Columbia was an all-boys school then. Old oak desks and a million cigarettes. (You could smoke in class.) I didn't know much about the university—not even that it was an all-boys university—until I got there. It was a new world for me. I had lived most of my life until then in a family of girls. Now there was a family of boys.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/07/07/finding-a-family-of-boys>

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

62. China's bid to influence the Philippines heats up. Economist. 5th July 2025.

They came bearing gifts—cash for poverty-relief schemes and shiny motorbikes for police officers. But the Chinese ingratiating themselves with Philippine officials were also mapping military bases, snapping coastguard vessels and surveying power plants. Since January the Philippines has arrested more than a dozen Chinese nationals and alleged Filipino accomplices on charges of espionage. The arrests point to operations that blur the line between influence-peddling and spying.

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2025/07/03/chinas-bid-to-influence-the-philippines-heats-up>

63. Central Asia still has a complex relationship with Russia. Economist. 5th July 2025.

Statues commemorating the Soviet Union's long-dead leaders, who once ruled an empire stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean, have had their ups and downs. A Moscow metro station recently unveiled a frieze glorifying Josef Stalin, now once again feted in Russia as a great leader. Shortly afterwards a gigantic statue of Vladimir Lenin, the Soviet Union's founding father, came toppling down in Kyrgyzstan, one of five former Soviet states in Central Asia. Yet it is still a staunch ally of the Kremlin.

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2025/07/03/central-asia-still-has-a-complex-relationship-with-russia>

64. Brazil's president is losing clout abroad and unpopular at home. Economist. 5th July 2025.

On June 22nd, hours after the United States struck Iranian nuclear sites with huge bunker-buster bombs, Brazil's foreign ministry put out a statement. It said that Brazil's government "strongly condemns" the American attack, which it called a "violation of Iran's sovereignty and international law". This strength of language put Brazil at odds with Western democracies, which either supported the strikes or merely expressed concern.

<https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2025/07/03/brazils-president-is-losing-clout-abroad-and-unpopular-at-home>

65. Canada makes a first concession to Donald Trump. Economist. 5th July 2025.

Lately Mark Carney has profited from firmly ditching his predecessors' policies. At the start of the year, during his campaign to run the Liberal Party, he promised to throw out the consumer-facing portion of Canada's carbon tax and backed smoothly away from progressive positions that had been miring the Liberals in culture wars. This made him look pragmatic and serious. It helped him win the party leadership and take the Liberals to an unprecedented fourth term in power.

<https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2025/07/03/canada-makes-a-first-concession-to-donald-trump>

66. Israel's weird war clock: 12 days for Iran, 21 months in Gaza. Economist. 5th July 2025.

To donald trump, peace seems simple. On July 1st the American president announced on social media that Israel had agreed to the "necessary conditions" for a ceasefire in Gaza. Little matter that neither Hamas, the Islamists who still run parts of Gaza, nor Israel had endorsed the idea. Unless they did, warned Mr Trump, things would "ONLY GET WORSE".

<https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2025/07/03/israels-weird-war-clock-12-days-for-iran-21-months-in-gaza>

67. The Israel-Iran war has not yet transformed the Middle East. Economist. 5th July 2025.

ASINGLE strike took on singular importance. When America attacked Iran's nuclear facilities last month, both supporters and opponents thought it would have outside consequences. Critics feared it would plunge the Middle East into a wider war. That doomsday scenario has not come to pass, at least for now: Iran made only symbolic retaliation against America; soon after, a ceasefire ended the fighting between Iran and Israel.

<https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2025/07/03/the-israel-iran-war-has-not-yet-transformed-the-middle-east>

68. Kenya's president is bad news for Kenya and Africa. Economist. 5th July 2025.

How to tell a genuine protester from a hired goon? The answer matters in Nairobi, Kenya's capital. On June 25th young Kenyans took to the streets to mark the first anniversary of what have become known as the "Gen-Z protests". Initially, they peacefully expressed their anger at William Ruto, the country's president. But by the end of the day much of downtown Nairobi was ablaze. Shop fronts were torn down and windows smashed. At least ten buildings were torched. Peter Ndengwa Mutula, a local tyre trader, says he suffered property damage worth 200,000 shillings (\$1,546). Though he cannot be sure who was responsible, he believes the government deliberately "inserted itself inside the protests" in order to incite violence. The resulting chaos, he adds, was "a prophetic sign of the end times".

<https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2025/07/03/kenyas-president-is-bad-news-for-kenya-and-africa>

69. A peace agreement in Africa that will probably not bring peace. Economist. 5th July 2025.

IT WAS AN unlikely picture. On June 27th the foreign ministers of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo stood in the Oval Office next to Donald

Trump, America's president, who hailed the peace deal they had just signed. "We're here today to celebrate a glorious triumph," said Mr Trump. "The violence and destruction comes to an end, and the entire region begins a new chapter of hope and opportunity, harmony, prosperity and peace."

<https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2025/06/28/a-peace-agreement-in-africa-that-will-probably-not-bring-peace>

70. Turkey's strongman is becoming Donald Trump's point man. Economist. 5th July 2025.

THEY HAVE picked up right where they had left off. Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and President Donald Trump were beaming as they shook hands at the NATO summit in The Hague on June 24th. Mr Erdogan seemed equally upbeat after their meeting, the first since Mr Trump's return to the White House, later that day. The American president, he announced, was warming up to the idea of unblocking the sale of F-35 stealth fighters to Turkey, stalled years ago after Mr Erdogan's purchase of an S-400 air-defence system from Russia.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2025/07/03/turkeys-strongman-is-becoming-donald-trumps-point-man>

71. How South Africa could harness Donald Trump's wrath. Economist. 5th July 2025.

NO SAILOR LIKES a hurricane. But if the alternative is drifting in the doldrums without hope, even vicious gales have their uses. As South Africa is buffeted by criticism from President Donald Trump and other American conservatives—some of it unfair and pushed by bad-faith actors—centrist business and political leaders dream of riding that storm to hasten reforms.

<https://www.economist.com/international/2025/07/01/how-south-africa-could-harness-donald-trumps-wrath>

72. The end of an era. TIME. Vol. 206, No 1-2. 7th July 2025. Page No.26-27.

It might be difficult to discern through the black clouds billowing from bomb craters in Tehran, but Iran has spent most of the 21st century as the region's rising power.

73. Iran's self-inflicted isolation. TIME. Vol. 206, No 1-2. 7th July 2025. Page No. 30.

It is a perilous moment for Iran. Israel has gained control of the skies. Much of the regime's top military command has been taken out, to say nothing of the civilian toll. U.S. President Donald Trump has called for an "unconditional surrender.

74. Arms and the Man. TIME. Vol. 206, No 1-2. 7th July 2025. Page No. 33-36.

NATO secretary- general Mark Rutte keeps a variety of mementos in his office. There is a sprawling photograph of the North sea from the vantage point of his hometown in the Netherlands, a kanji gift from Japan's Minister of Defense, and a framed floral embroidery that reads "In Unity is strength" in Cyrillic with the stitched flags of NATO, Ukraine , and the E.U. But the room's largest ornamental feature is the blue- and - white map of the world that looms above his conference desk.

75. The obscure Senate functionary whose word is law. Economist. 5th July 2025.

SENATORS, ALAS, are not much like nuns. But the Senate itself bears a certain resemblance to a convent, with its hushed halls, arcane rituals and air of separation from real life. Above all, it has a Mother Superior, who is a stickler for the rules. She is immune to criticism and flattery. Her work is dull and thankless. In theory she answers to a higher power. In practice she is almighty. She is the Senate parliamentarian.

<https://www.economist.com/briefing/2025/07/03/the-obscure-senate-functionary-whose-word-is-law>

76. The Supreme Court keeps helping Donald Trump. Economist. 5th July 2025.

THE SUPREME COURT decided just 55 fully argued or “merits” cases in the term that ended on June 27th—the lowest total since the civil war, except for the covid-curtailed term of 2020. Yet the justices have been busier than ever. President Donald Trump’s use of the court’s emergency docket has forced the justices to review extraordinary assertions of executive power on a speeded-up timeline. Of the 15 emergency applications that have been resolved (four are pending), 12 have gone Mr Trump’s way.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2025/07/03/the-supreme-court-keeps-helping-donald-trump>

77. On its tenth birthday, gay marriage in America is under attack. Economist. 5th July 2025.

In 2004 the first legal same-sex marriage in America took place in city hall in Cambridge, Massachusetts. President George W. Bush condemned the development, as did Democratic politicians. At the time most Americans agreed—polls showed nearly twice as many opposed gay marriages as supported it. But public support for gay marriage swelled in the years to come. And what began as a judicial decision championed by Birkenstock-wearing liberals in one of America’s most progressive states became the law of the land ten years ago, on June 26th 2015, when the Supreme Court ruled in Obergefell v Hodges that gay couples have a constitutional right to marry.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2025/06/26/on-its-tenth-birthday-gay-marriage-in-america-is-under-attack>

78. The sleeping policeman at the heart of Europe. Economist. 5th July 2025.

For a continent with a masochistic penchant for regulation, Europe is oddly not very good at crafting it. Over 2,500 new legal acts come out of the European Union machinery in any given year, or roughly one every hour of every working day (the summer offers some respite, but not much). A belated realisation that this regulatory fire-hose may have dampened growth has resulted in a slew of recently adopted EU rules being sunk before they have even been set afloat—to the delight of companies dreading being submerged in yet more red tape.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2025/07/03/the-sleeping-policeman-at-the-heart-of-europe>

79. From 50 Years Ago: Law and the Adivasis: Story of the Peasants of Akkalkuva. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025. The history of these Mehwas states is interesting. The Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency published in 1880 describes the Mehwas states as half-independent lands of the Mehwas. British rule over Khandesh was

established by July 1818. However, there were repeated Bhil revolts upto 1825. Even after that some Bhil uprisings took place and finally peace was established in 1859. In 1880, the region had an estimated gross yearly revenue of Rs 50,000 and a population of about 7,000. The people were generally Bhils who had some Rajput blood and were more turbulent and warlike than the Bhils of the Dangs. Civil and criminal justice was dispensed according to rules framed under Act XI of 1846. The chiefs settled petty cases, each in his own estate, punishing by fine and whipping. There was no regular police force, the chiefs maintained small bodies of 10 to 15 irregular troops, who collected revenue, attended on the chiefs and, under the Khandesh Superintendent of Police, kept order on the frontier, and performed other police duties.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/26-27/50-years-ago/50-years-ago-law-and-advocacy-story-peasants.html>

80. India's Municipal Finance System at a Crossroads. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025.

Article 280(3)(c) is an important constitutional provision that requires the finance commissions to recommend measures for augmenting the Consolidated Fund of the state to supplement the resources of the municipalities. Finance commissions have made use of this provision to recommend grants-in-aid for municipalities to take on functions that far exceed their statutorily defined responsibilities, undertake systemic reforms, and establish protocols for ensuring compliance with the recommendations. This article explores these features of Article 280(3)(c) and takes a close look at the consequential changes in the finances and finance systems of municipalities.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/26-27/perspectives/indias-municipal-finance-system-crossroads.html>

81. Honour Killings in Tamil Nadu. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025.

Marriage customs in India are deeply intertwined with caste and gender norms, which predominantly promote arranged marriages between a man and a woman belonging to the same caste group. Caste endogamy serves as a key mechanism for sustaining caste hierarchies, conferring upper-caste women a high ritual purity status along with certain material benefits (Velaskar 2016). These advantages ensure women's compliance with endogamy, often upheld through coercion (Chakravarti 2003).

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/26-27/perspectives/honour-killings-tamil-nadu.html>

82. From Silence to Strength. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025.

While dominant Brahminical discourses frequently frame caste discrimination as a relic of the past, its explicit and subtle manifestations continue to shape the lived experiences of marginalised communities. In this context, Dalit memoirs have emerged as a powerful medium for self-assertion and the articulation of caste-based oppression, challenging Brahminical hegemony and amplifying silenced voices.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/26-27/postscript/silence-strength.html>

LITERATURE

83. Inside the uneasy, incongruous coalition of the Big Three. Economist. 5th July 2025.

The destruction of the French fleet at Mers el-Kébir, Algeria, by the Royal Navy in July 1940 was both Britain's first victory of the second world war and its most distasteful. Winston Churchill had decided that, unless French officers scuttled their ships or sailed them to British or American ports, they must be destroyed. If the collaborationist Vichy government handed the fleet over to the Germans, the consequences would be disastrous. Almost 1,300 French sailors died in the attack.

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2025/07/03/inside-the-uneasy-incongruous-coalition-of-the-big-three>

84. Anne Enright's Literary Journeys to Australia and New Zealand. New Yorker. 14th July 2025.

Not long ago, the Irish writer Anne Enright visited Australia and New Zealand. When asking for a local recommendation at the Potts Point Bookshop, in Sydney, she was encouraged to pick up Charlotte Wood's novel "Stone Yard Devotional." "That was a very good steer," Enright said. She loved the book and soon struck up a correspondence with Wood, who went on to send her a box of fiction from that part of the world. Enright has since spent time catching up on books that she suspects may have been overlooked because of their authors' distance from the centers of literary influence. "Reading is about elsewhere, and about elsewhere coming back to you and illuminating your life in some way," she said. She joined us recently to discuss a few favorite discoveries. Her remarks have been edited and condensed.

<https://www.newyorker.com/books/book-currents/anne-enrights-literary-journeys-to-australia-and-new-zealand>

85. The Silence. New Yorker. 14th July 2025.

A great silence opened up inside her. But that made it sound more dramatic than it was. It happened by degrees, creeping up slyly. And at times, in certain places and situations, it was expected and welcome—on a long walk, or when a person confessed something pitiful, or at a funeral or a party. In all those places, where once she'd had a lot to say—too much, honestly—now there was this silence and she became a far better listener. Not consciously, that was just one of the consequences. It wasn't a Zen silence or an enlightened silence or anything she'd worked to achieve. It was only a sort of blank. Once, on a mini-break, she'd spotted a sentence graffitied on a bridge in Paris: "The world is everything that is the case." (It was written in English and stuck in her mind.) The silence felt like that: it spoke for itself. But it could also offend and disappoint others, the same way the world itself never seems enough for some people. It was no use on big family occasions, for example, or when one of her adult daughters called her name from another room, or if someone at work asked for her view on the news of the day. It could make other people feel awkward. But when she was alone with it, whenever it coincided with her own long-standing habit of looking upward into the branches of trees—then it didn't really bother her at all.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/07/07/the-silence-fiction-zadie-smith>

86. Jubilee. New Yorker.14th July 2025.

A wooden ruler with the etched faces of Henry VIII's six wives running down the middle; ticket stubs from Hampton Court and the Chamber of Horrors, where we walked ahead of our mothers, hand in hand; a few wrappers of Dairy Milk. I still see clearly the brochure from Madame Tussaud's, a green nameplate on the cover with white lettering. We shuddered at the likeness of one particularly sinister man standing in an olive-colored three-piece suit with old brown pharmaceutical bottles behind him. We'd seen him in the chamber dedicated to those who poisoned and stabbed and slashed. Later, flipping through the brochure, sitting side by side, we braced ourselves for his effigy; how we dreaded turning to that page. A Mavis Gallant story I discovered only recently likens the compulsion to save tickets and programs to a type of narcissism: that's how a mother interprets a daughter's need to hold on to memorabilia. But was that not what Gallant had done in some of her stories, and taught me to do? Intertwining invention with preserved bits and scraps of life? Already that spring, about to turn ten in the city of my birth, I was attempting to leave some trace, struggling to glimpse myself on a murky surface.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/07/07/jubilee-fiction-jhumpa-lahiri>

87. The Comedian. New Yorker.14th July 2025.

My father worked nights as the desk attendant at a cheap hotel downtown. It was a thankless job behind bulletproof glass, which was all he had to shield him from demented drunks and screeching prostitutes, from seven in the evening until four in the morning, the poor man. But he had to do it. The next month's rent was always due. Life cost money. I was in high school and growing so quickly that I needed new shoes all the time. And he had to pay my clarinet teacher and the girl who came to clean once a week. My mother hadn't been able to work for years already. By the time I turned sixteen, she was completely blind, and so, while my father was downtown with the scum of the earth, it was my job to keep my mother company, to feed her and put her to bed, etcetera.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/07/07/the-comedian-fiction-ottessa-moshfegh>

88. The Argentinean Comic Strip That Galvanized a Generation. New Yorker.14th July 2025.

A uniformed police officer stands sideways, his head turned to face us. His eyes are unnaturally close together, rendered by the artist as two black dots floating in the very center of his face. He has a drooping nose, a thin mustache, and a glum look, staring as if he is aware of being watched. Behind him stands a little girl, less than half his size, wearing a red dress, a red bow poking from the thicket of her heavy black hair. Her eyes are big and sad, and her index finger touches the tip of the nightstick hanging from the policeman's belt. "You see?" she says, with a worried expression. "This is the little stick for squashing ideologies."

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/07/07/the-argentinean-comic-strip-that-galvanized-a-generation>

89. Graham, Jorie

Deep Winter Stars. New Yorker.14th July 2025.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/07/07/deep-winter-stars-jorie-graham-poem>

90. Hicok, Bob

The Eulogy I Didn't Give (XXXVII). New Yorker.14th July 2025.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/07/07/the-eulogy-i-didnt-give-xxxvii-bob-hicok-poem>

POLITICAL SCIENCE & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

91. Trumponomics 2.0 will erode the foundations of America's prosperity. Economist. 5th July 2025.

Was it JUST a false alarm? The panic about the world economy that followed President Donald Trump's "Liberation Day" tariffs in April has given way to growing optimism. Tariffs' inflationary effect has so far been muted. In private, bosses say they now expect trade fights to produce trade deals, not to be an end in themselves. Surveys show that business and consumer confidence, though low, is improving. The S&P 500 index of stocks has hit a record high.

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2025/07/03/trumponomics-20-will-erode-the-foundations-of-americas-prosperity>

92. Sir Keir Starmer is rapidly losing his authority. Economist. 5th July 2025.

The first birthday of Britain's Labour government on July 4th will be a miserable, cakeless affair. The party's polling is dreadful, trailing Reform UK, an insurgency from the right led by Nigel Farage. Promises to cut hospital waiting-lists, build more houses and stop migrant boats are off-track. And on July 1st Sir Keir Starmer was humiliated by a huge rebellion, as Labour MPs gutted a bill to cut sickness and disability benefits. In Parliament the next day his chancellor wept and yields on Britain's debt soared. The prime minister has never looked weaker.

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2025/07/03/sir-keir-starmer-is-rapidly-losing-his-authority>

93. William Ruto is taking Kenya to a dangerous place. Economist. 5th July 2025.

For the past two decades, if you searched a map of Africa for a country that was relatively stable politically and successful economically, one stood out: Kenya. Home to 57m people from 40 ethnic groups, the east African country has grown steadily and sustained a largely peaceful democracy. But now the picture is looking bleak. Kenyans are increasingly discontented and venting their anger in the streets. President William Ruto, elected in 2022 on a promise to improve the lives of ordinary Kenyans, has responded to demonstrations with brutality and censorship. A spiral of riot and repression is eroding civil liberties and may jeopardise economic reforms. Mr Ruto must change tack.

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2025/07/03/william-ruto-is-taking-kenya-to-a-dangerous-place>

94. The best check on Fed politicisation is fear of being judged a failure, says Richard Clarida. Economist. 5th July 2025.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP has once again been aiming sharp criticism at Jerome Powell, accusing the Federal Reserve chairman of keeping interest rates “artificially high” and being a “bad person”. Although in the past Mr Trump has argued that the president can under law “fire” the Fed chair if they disagree over monetary policy, this would almost certainly be fought in the courts, including by Mr Powell himself. Regardless, because Mr Powell’s second statutory four-year term as Fed chair ends in May 2026, Mr Trump will soon have a chance to nominate his successor. Given the president’s relentless attacks on the Fed chief since retaking office in January, his nominee’s commitment to resisting pressure from the White House is sure to be closely scrutinised by Congress and financial markets.

<https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2025/06/30/the-best-check-on-fed-politicisation-is-fear-of-being-judged-a-failure-says-richard-clarida>

95. The big beautiful bill reveals the hollowness of Trumponomics. Economist. 5th July 2025.

IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY the chimera was part lion, part goat and part snake, but wholly monstrous. Despite its name, there is a chimerical air to the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (BBB), the Republican tax-and-spending plan that lurched through Congress this week. It sutures to a body of government-shrinking Reaganism an appendage of populist Trumpism, both disfigured by carve-outs and fillips for individual lawmakers. It will menace the American economy for at least a decade.

<https://www.economist.com/briefing/2025/07/02/the-big-beautiful-bill-reveals-the-hollowness-of-trumponomics>

96. Thailand’s prime minister has been suspended. Economist. 5th July 2025. Thailand’s Constitutional Court has suspended Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra following a petition alleging she breached ethics in a call to Hun Sen, Cambodia’s strongman, which he leaked. Ms Paetongtarn appears to disparage a Thai general for being hot-headed over a border spat between the two countries. The petition, by senators, suggests conservative forces in the army, palace and parliament are calling time on the populist movement long led by Ms Paetongtarn’s father, Thaksin Shinawatra. He, too, is in court on charges of lèse-majesté. In 2008 the generals ousted him in a coup; in 2014 they seized power from his sister. This time the Shinawatras look likelier to be dispatched with a gavel.

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2025/07/03/thailands-prime-minister-has-been-suspended>

97. Beware tomes of Chinese political gossip! Economist. 5th July 2025. Reading banned books behind closed doors on a snowy night is one of life’s greatest pleasures,” goes a popular saying in China. It is often (perhaps mistakenly) attributed to a 17th-century scholar, but is used to convey a yearning that many relate to today. Surprisingly, Chinese officials are among those who treasure poring over gossipy political works that the Communist Party prohibits. In recent months, numerous high-ranking ones have been accused of keeping secret stashes.

<https://www.economist.com/china/2025/07/03/beware-tomes-of-chinese-political-gossip>

98. Hong Kong’s last functioning pro-democracy party disbands. Economist. 5th July 2025.

TEARS ROLLED down Chan Po-ying's face at the disbandment of the League of Social Democrats (LSD), the last functioning pro-democracy party in Hong Kong, on June 29th. Ms Chan, the party's leader, spoke of the impossibility of operating amid "the omnipresence of red lines and the draconian suppression of dissent".

<https://www.economist.com/china/2025/07/03/hong-kongs-last-functioning-pro-democracy-party-disbands>

99. Will bowing to Trump win Paramount its merger? Economist. 5th July 2025. Ancient warlords excelled at ritual humiliation. Their technique was simple: vanquish the enemy, take his loot, build a fort with it, display his impaled head there. Visitors to Donald Trump's future presidential library will recognise the warlords' method. There will be no severed heads, and probably few books. But in other respects, the building will be a monument to conquest.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2025/07/03/will-bowing-to-trump-win-paramount-its-merger>

100. Why Thomas Jefferson is rolling in his grave. Economist. 5th July 2025. THOMAS JEFFERSON never wanted a president at the University of Virginia (UVA). For 85 years, there wasn't one: along with a governing board, an unwieldy rotation of professors managed the institution, which Jefferson founded almost a half-century after writing the Declaration of Independence. Since June 27th the public university has again found itself without a leader. Facing what looked a lot like an ultimatum from the Trump administration, James Ryan, UVA's president since 2018, said he would step down.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2025/07/03/why-thomas-jefferson-is-rolling-in-his-grave>

101. America needs an honest reckoning over its spy agencies. Economist. 5th July 2025. The question of how far America has set back Iran's nuclear programme clearly matters. That can be far less certain of any of the answers America is coming up with. While the strikes on Iran showed the supremacy of American air power, they also may have revealed a weakness in its national security. According to Donald Trump, the country's spy agencies failed before the assault in a critical mission, assessing the threat posed by Iran's nuclear programme. Mr Trump's claim should heighten doubts now about intelligence reports and White House statements regarding the effectiveness of the air assault. Should anyone trust the conclusions? Which ones? Is the president getting it wrong himself?

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2025/07/03/america-needs-an-honest-reckoning-over-its-spy-agencies>

102. Cuba's leaders fiddle the figures. Economist. 5th July 2025. Summer is never easy in tropical Cuba. Suffocating heat and humidity conspire with a dysfunctional electricity supply to highlight government inadequacy and incompetence. Patience tends to fray. This year promises to be crabbier than usual. The country's feeble grid was already stretched to breaking point last winter, when electricity demand was lower. Now blackouts are longer than ever. Most residents of Havana, the capital, count themselves lucky to have power for more than a few hours a day. They complain of food spoiling in fridges and sleepless nights in smothering,

breezeless bedrooms. And anti-government protests may be on the way. The last big one, in July 2021, led to hundreds of arrests.

<https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2025/07/03/cubas-leaders-fiddle-the-figures>

103. Iran's "axis of resistance" was meant to be the Shias' NATO. Economist. 5th July 2025.

The ten days of Shia lamentation for Hussein, the Prophet Muhammad's grandson, end this year on July 6th, with Ashura. They are always filled with anguish but this year that is even more true. In shrines across the Middle East, eulogists lauded the recently dead. Worshippers beat their chests and lashed themselves with chains as the coffins of the hundreds killed in Israeli strikes were paraded past. In the rubble of their southern villages and the suburbs of Beirut, Lebanon's Shias cried for their fallen leaders and footsoldiers. From Lucknow to London, Shias asked whether their brief revival was over, and whether they faced a future, once again, as Islam's oppressed.

<https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2025/07/03/irans-axis-of-resistance-was-meant-to-be-the-shias-nato>

104. A pragmatic amnesty for separatists benefits Catalonia. Economist. 5th July 2025.

BARCELONA is booming, the hotels full and taxis hard to find. The political conversation in Catalonia, one of Spain's largest and richest regions, is about the everyday issues of housing, airport expansion and immigration. The local administration is waging an international campaign to promote Catalan gastronomy on the strength of more than 50 Michelin-starred restaurants in the region. Some of the 4,000 businesses that moved their domicile to other parts of Spain are trickling back. It is all a far cry from 2017, when a separatist Catalan government plunged Spain into turmoil with an unconstitutional referendum on secession and a unilateral declaration of independence, followed by the jailing of nine of its leaders.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2025/07/03/a-pragmatic-amnesty-for-separatists-benefits-catalonia>

105. Starmer's wasted first year. Economist. 5th July 2025.

When Sir Keir Starmer's Labour Party was in opposition, policy-watchers hunted for a glimmer of ideology. They saw little of the intellectual ferment behind Sir Tony Blair's "third way". Sir Keir's diagnosis of Britain's problems was unflashy: under the Tories, he said in 2023, there was a "sense that nothing works, that we're going backwards, a country in decline". Under Labour, an orderly government would restore Britons' faith in the system. He articulated a set of "foundations" and "missions", which included promises both vague and precise.

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2025/07/03/starmer-wasted-first-year>

106. Britain's least controversial national treasure. Economist. 5th July 2025.

THE daily schedule of the Shipping Forecast is etched on the mind of nearly every British sailor, starting at 48 minutes past midnight. The BBC has broadcast it for 100 years, interrupted only by war or pandemic. Always that calm, clear voice telling of what comes next—when a bout of weather is to arrive, or when it is to leave. The voice gives the general synopsis and then

moves in clockwise fashion around the sea areas of the British Isles. The litany is cryptic, but once you understand the key it is a supremely concise way to convey wind strength, sea state, weather (ie, rain or snow) and visibility. There is lyricism: seas go from “smooth” (wave heights of less than 0.5 metres) to “phenomenal” (more than 14 metres).

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2025/07/03/britains-least-controversial-national-treasure>

107. Citizenship Weaponised, Rights Denied. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025.

Over the last few weeks, several instances of “mistaken deportation” of Indian citizens to Bangladesh have been reported and rightly caused an alarm. The pattern that seems to be emerging is arrests of Bengali (either migrants from West Bengal or Bengali-speaking from Assam) Muslim individuals, who are then literally pushed across the India–Bangladesh border by the Border Security Force (BSF). The basis for this action is their purported status as illegal immigrants. Two broad types of cases of such “mistaken” deportations have been observed. One is that of Bengali Muslim migrants being branded as Bangladeshi by the local police in their seemingly overzealous drives to nab illegal immigrants. Four such individuals were arrested by the Maharashtra police in Mumbai and handed over to the BSF, who forced them to enter Bangladesh. These individuals were brought back only after the West Bengal police produced the documents proving that they are indeed Indian citizens, originally hailing from Murshidabad and Bardhaman. One shudders to think of the eventuality if the West Bengal police had not intervened and also of the possibility of several such cases where such intervention could not be arranged.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/26-27/editorials/citizenship-weaponised-rights-denied.html>

108. Changing Fertility Behaviours. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025.

Driving the conversation towards reproductive autonomy—the fundamental right of individuals to make independent choices about their bodies and reproductive futures—and demographic resilience, the United Nations Population Fund’s (UNFPA) flagship 2025 State of World Population Report, Real Fertility Crisis, provides crucial insights into human fertility worldwide. An online poll conducted across 14 countries, including India, as part of the report by UNFPA and YouGov, reveals new evidence on reproductive barriers and the lingering tension between aspirational and realised fertility.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/26-27/comment/changing-fertility-behaviours.html>

109. Revisiting the Amendment Debate. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025.

When comparing the Constitutions of India with the United States (US), scholars tend to view the latter as an exemplary model of federalism. While comparatively analysing, the scholarship on federal constitutionalism often focuses on the US Federal Constitution and overlooks the significance of state constitutionalism within the country. This article aims to comprehensively analyse the number of times the Constitution was amended in both countries and highlight the crucial distinction between the two systems.

<https://www.epw.in/index.php/journal/2025/26-27/commentary/revisiting-amendment-debate.html>

110. Minnesota shootings highlight the rise of political violence. TIME. Vol. 206, No 1-2. 7th July 2025. Page No-5.

The shootings of two Minnesota lawmakers and their spouses brought renewed attention to the rise in political violence across the U.S. IN RECENT YEARS. Democratic state representative Melissa Hortman and her husband Mark were shot and killed on July 14 by a man who authorities say was impersonating a police officer. The same shooter attacked Democratic state senator John Hoffman and his wife Yvette, who were hospitalized with multiple gunshot wounds.

111. When religion was forced on Americans. TIME. Vol. 206, No 1-2. 7th July 2025. Page No. 22.

Before the American revolution, many colonies had established churches supported with tax dollars or imposed religious restrictions on voting or holding office. There was no separation of church and state. In Virginia, the most populous colony, everyone paid a tax to support the Anglican Church, which controlled marriage, poor relief, and care of orphans, and enforced laws regarding profanity and church attendance. If religious dissenters died leaving young children, Anglican officials would often place them in an Anglican home. Dissenters who failed to attend Anglican services regularly were often fined.

112. Trump, Congress, and the War Powers Resolution. New Yorker. 14th July 2025.

Two interrelated fears that have caused mounting public alarm with respect to the Trump Administration involve unchecked executive power and the erosion of the rule of law. These worries have intensified in debates about the legality of President Trump's decision to bomb Iranian nuclear facilities more than a week into Israel's war against Iran. Members of both houses of Congress had introduced resolutions to try to prevent Trump from taking such military action without its authorization. But the energy that some lawmakers had mustered for a rare attempt to assert Congress's constitutional power against Trump seemed to dissipate, at least while they expected a ceasefire between Israel and Iran to hold.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/07/07/trump-congress-and-the-war-powers-resolution>

113. Bihar's Electoral Revision Puts the Poor's Rights at Risk. India Forum. 6th July 2025.

The Election Commission of India's (ECI) decision on 24 June to conduct a special intensive revision of the electoral roll in Bihar months ahead of the assembly elections has attracted public scrutiny, with concerns being raised that it may be an attempt to introduce the National Register of Citizens (NRC) through the backdoor. The argument may have some merit, but before delving into the complexities associated with the decision, let us first examine the ECI's reason for this move at this time.

<https://www.theindiaforum.in/politics/bihars-electoral-revision-puts-poor-rights-risk>

SCIENCE

114. A new project aims to synthesise a human chromosome. Economist. 5th July 2025.

WHEN THE first draft of the DNA sequence that makes up the human genome was unveiled in 2000, America's president at the time, Bill Clinton, announced that humankind was "learning the language with which God created life". His assessment was a little quick off the mark. For one thing, the full sequence would not be completed until 2022. For another, whereas scientists can use sequencing tools to read DNA, and CRISPR technology to make small edits, actually writing the genomic language has proved trickier.

<https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2025/07/02/a-new-project-aims-to-synthesise-a-human-chromosome>

115. How sea slugs give themselves superpowers. Economist. 5th July 2025.

SOME SEA slugs are kleptomaniacs. *Elysia crispata*, a species of these marine molluscs found in the western Atlantic and the Caribbean, is among the most notorious. When the slugs eat algae, their bodies pinch bits of the algae's cells, known as chloroplasts, that enable photosynthesis. These are put to good use, giving the slugs their verdant hue which, along with their frilly back, earned them the moniker "lettuce slug" (see picture). They also continue to function inside the slug for about a year, providing them with photosynthetic energy. Scientists have known about this process, termed kleptoplasty, for decades. But how the heist was pulled off remained a mystery.

<https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2025/07/02/how-sea-slugs-give-themselves-superpowers>

116. Is being bilingual good for your brain? Economist. 5th July 2025.

Reams of papers have been published on the cognitive advantages of multilingualism. Beyond the conversational doors it can open, multilingualism is supposed to improve "executive function", a loose concept that includes the ability to ignore distractions, plan complex tasks and update beliefs as new information arrives. Most striking, numerous studies have even shown that bilinguals undergo a later onset of dementia, perhaps of around four years, on average. But some of these studies have failed to replicate, leaving experts wondering whether the effect is real, and if so, what exactly it consists of.

<https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2025/06/27/is-being-bilingual-good-for-your-brain>

117. From 25 Years Ago: Electricity Reform and Regulation: Some Issues. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025.

It is in this context of an electricity industry that is not generating a surplus for investment, that independent regulation was introduced in India. The first state commission was created in 1996, the central commission in 1998 and other state commissions have come later. The central commission regulates electricity tariffs and transmission up to the boundaries of any of the states. All tariffs for generation, transmission, distribution, as well as for purchase and supply within a state are regulated by the state commissions concerned.

<https://www.epw.in/index.php/journal/2025/26-27/25-years-ago/25-years-ago-electricity-reform-and-regulation.html>

118. Can the musk- Trump feud ground NASA? TIME. Vol. 206, No 1-2. 7th July 2025. Page No-6.

On June 5, as the feud between erst- while besties President Trump and Elon Musk escalated, Trump posted on his truth Social platform, "The easiest way to save money in our Budget, Billion and Billions of Dollars, is to terminate Elon's Governmental Subsidies and Contracts. I was always surprised that Biden didn't do it" About 90 minutes later, in a post on X, Musk clapped back: In light of the president's statement about cancellation of my government contracts, @ SpaceX will begin decommissioning its Dragon spacecraft immediately.

SOCIOLOGY

119. In Putin's Moscow, a summer of death and distraction. Economist. 5th July 2025.

WATCH RUSSIAN television or listen to Vladimir Putin's chilling speeches, and Russia is a besieged fortress, struggling to preserve humanity against the decadent West, defending the traditional values of family life, and defying death by its readiness to sacrifice life. Walk down Moscow streets, however, and it looks nothing like a city in the grip of a death cult. But neither did Berlin in the early 1940s, with its cabarets and heady consumption.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2025/06/30/in-putins-moscow-a-summer-of-death-and-distraction>

120. Conflicts over Water. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025.

The global water crisis demands recognition as a critical issue. This article frames the crisis through the concept of water stress and highlights its disproportionate impact on marginalised populations. It argues that the issue is anthropogenic rather than a result of purely natural causes. Addressing a gap in existing social science literature, it critiques the dominant development discourse and calls for a just hydraulic order that prioritises the wisdom of the community over expert-driven approaches and introduces the concept of hydraulic justice to reframe the discussion.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/26-27/commentary/conflicts-over-water.html>

121. An Obituary to Literature. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025.

The humanities disciplines, particularly literature and philosophy, are facing a disintegration amid rising neo-liberal and market-oriented academic paradigms. Administrative indifference and rationales mired in spreadsheets, cost-benefit analyses, and employability metrics are gradually burying disciplines foundational to critical judgments, empathy, and democratic thoughts. The closure of these disciplines is framed as an imperative rational restructuring. However, they mask deeper ideological recasting that favours profitability over intellectual inquiry.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/26-27/commentary/obituary-literature.html>

122. Daughter Deficit. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025.

Conventionally, the north-eastern region of India is perceived as comparatively advanced in gender-related developmental outcomes, leading to an expectation that Assam would demonstrate favourable conditions regarding the survival and status of women. This article employs district-level data sourced from the National Family Health Surveys-4 (2015–16) and NFHS-5 (2019–21), along with unit-level data from NFHS-5 (2019–21), to undertake an examination of this presumption. The analysis reveals notable district-level variations in the sex ratio at birth. Furthermore, using logistic regression analysis on the unit-level data, this article quantitatively assesses the impact of various factors on the likelihood of women expressing a desire to cease childbearing.

<https://www.epw.in/index.php/journal/2025/26-27/insight/daughter-deficit.html>

123. Decoding Rising Female Labour Force Participation in India. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025.

A paradoxical situation has emerged in the Indian labour market over the last few decades. On the one hand, India has witnessed a consistent declining trend in female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) during the 1990s and in the first one and a half decades of the millennium (from 33.1% in 1993–94 to 17.5% in 2017–18) despite increases in economic growth, female education, wages and reduction in the fertility rate. On the other hand, there has been a steady increasing trend in FLFPR over the last five years (from 18.6% in 2018–19 to 27.8% in 2022–23), especially when global economies were experiencing the worst economic recession owing to COVID-19 and women were hit the hardest in the job market across the globe (State of Working India 2023; Nikore et al 2022).

<https://www.epw.in/index.php/journal/2025/26-27/special-articles/decoding-rising-female-labour-force-participation.html>

124. How Do Women Fare in Manufacturing Work?. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025.

Evidence from recent employment surveys indicates that there was a distinct worsening of both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the employment situation after 2011–12. Post COVID-19, the employment situation has shown remarkable improvement, with the work participation of women recovering significantly. This paper examines the improvement in women's employment in manufacturing since 2017–18, both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/26-27/special-articles/how-do-women-fare-manufacturing-work.html>

125. Jeff Bezos's Big Fat Geek Wedding. New Yorker.14th July 2025.

From the bell tower on the island of San Giorgio Maggiore—just a third of a mile, but centuries away from the selfie sticks of Piazza San Marco—you can see nearly all of Venice. And all of Venice can see you. So activists discovered when, on June 12th, they ascended the structure and unfurled a huge banner bearing the word “BEZOS,” which had been crossed out with a big red “X.” The image went straight from the campanile to CNN.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/07/07/jeff-bezoss-big-fat-geek-wedding>

126. Zadie Smith on Grace Paley's "My Father Addresses Me on the Facts of Old Age". New Yorker.14th July 2025.

It's hard to overstate how startled I was upon first reading Grace Paley. At the time, I'd never really given a lot of thought to stories. I didn't come across them much during my education—aside from a few Sherlock Holmes tales and too much Somerset Maugham. My idea of the form was very distorted. Neat little British packages tied up with a tight bow. Airless. I was unfamiliar with the more formally inventive American tradition, or the fact that there were any magazines or journals that published short fiction. (The first time I saw a copy of *The New Yorker* was when it published me.) Reading "My Father Addresses Me on the Facts of Old Age" in the early years of a new century was genuinely transformative. No twists or moralizing.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/takes/zadie-smith-on-grace-paleys-my-father-addresses-me-on-the-facts-of-old-age>

127. Jhumpa Lahiri on Mavis Gallant's "Voices Lost in Snow". New Yorker.14th July 2025.

"Voices Lost in Snow" ran in *The New Yorker* in 1976, though I discovered it almost two decades later, in a discarded library copy of "Home Truths," a volume now out of print. I was plunged into Mavis Gallant's vertiginous world, stunned by the way she excavated the past, shuffled narrative time, and privileged shards of perception over conventional plots. The story forms part of a semi-autobiographical sextet, often referred to as the Linnet Muir series, and is an example of how Gallant dispenses with forced (and, I would argue, fallacious) distinctions between life and art, between the novel and the short form. When I fell under the spell of her work many years ago, I was still learning to piece together my first stories; it felt like sounding out scales and arpeggios after listening to the teacher perform Mozart or Bach.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/takes/jhumpa-lahiri-on-mavis-gallants-voices-lost-in-snow>

SPORTS

128. Germany's Bundestag bars AfD MPs from its football team. Economist. 5th July 2025.

EVERY TUESDAY evening when Germany's Bundestag is in session, a gaggle of cross-party mps discard their suits, clamber into a team bus and decamp to a football pitch in east Berlin where they take on amateur all-comers. Founded in 1961, and open to current and former male and female mps, fc Bundestag's roster has included such luminaries as Joschka Fischer and the late Wolfgang Schäuble. It presents itself as a place where political rivals can set aside their differences in the interests of beating their opponents on the pitch, raising money for good causes in the process. Its website proudly declares the team "Ambassadors of Parliament".

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2025/07/03/germanys-bundestag-bars-afd-mps-from-its-football-team>

TRAVEL DESCRIPTION

129. Welcome to North Korea's Benidorm. Economist. 5th July 2025.

LESS THAN a decade ago the Kalma peninsula was still being used to test weapons. But on June 24th the Wonsan-Kalma Beach Resort was at last ready enough for Kim Jong Un to relax poolside. With his wife, daughter and cigarettes by his side, North Korea's dictator looked on as a man shot out of a waterslide.

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2025/07/03/welcome-to-north-koreas-benidorm>

130. A Traveller's Melancholy. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.60, No.26-27. 28th June 2025.

Often, while "on the road," I have experienced a state of mind that philosophers and clinicians alike have called melancholy—generally described as "pensive sadness" or "prolonged depression." Historically, it was thought that an excess of "black bile" led to melancholy. Throughout the ages, it has descended upon many artists, lovers, scholars, and the devout. It has been the ground for countless imagery and strategies.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/26-27/postscript/travellers-melancholy.html>

Annexure I- List of Journals and Magazines covered in this Issue.

S.No.	Title	Periodicity	Place of Publication
1	Economist (A.M.)	W	London
2	Economic and Political Weekly	W	Mumbai
3	India Forum	W	India
4	New Yorker	W	New York
5	Time	W	Chicago
6	University News	W	Delhi