

## ARTICLE ALERT 1-15 JANUARY 2026

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## ART

## 1. The truth about affordability. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

SLOP, PARASOCIAL and rage bait were contenders for word of the year in 2025. In 2026 an early favourite for that title, at least among pollsters and election strategists, is “affordability”, often paired with the word “crisis”. Having at last found a slogan that seems to work against the spell of Trumpism, Democrats will talk of little else between now and the midterms in November. In Europe, which is better at reposting American memes than coming up with fresh ones, there is talk of a cost-of-living crisis. A transatlantic consensus is forming that prices are out of whack. But are they?

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2025/12/30/the-truth-about-affordability>

## 2. Divine fusion. Frontline. Vol.42. No-24. 1-15 Jan 2026.

In the performing arts ecosystems today, artistic collaborations and experiments across disciplines are not unusual. Indeed, they are often the mainstay of large festivals and intimate spaces alike. The same cannot be said of the traditional and classical art forms though, which seem to strain at forging and realising a genuine artistic collaboration. When they do happen, often driven by the feverish desire to cobble something together to cater to the demands of curators and festival directors scouting for “something different, something more” from the classical arts, they end up looking contrived and facile.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/arts-and-culture/art/call-of-the-flute-kuchipudi-pichwa-review/article70384005.ece>

## 3. Jim Jarmusch's Ironically Optimistic Family Movie. New Yorker. 5th Jan 2026.

**Jim Jarmusch, one of the heroes** of American independent filmmaking, is a longtime specialist in the tenuous relationships of free agents. With his new film, “**Father Mother Sister Brother**” (opening Dec. 24 at Film Forum and Film at Lincoln Center), he turns his attention to family bonds and finds them to be similarly uncertain—and perhaps all the more dubious owing to the pretense of their firmness. What's more, he makes his case ambitiously and inventively, by way of a three-part feature showing three families in different countries facing wildly disparate circumstances.

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/goings-on/jim-jarmuschs-ironically-optimistic-family-movie>

## 4. A Puppet Called Paddington. New Yorker. 5th Jan 2026.

Given that the U.K.'s wolves and moose expired long ago, the country's largest land predator today is, somewhat embarrassingly, the European badger. Other aggressive species include the horsefly, a venomous sand-burrowing fish, and the cherubic-looking pine marten, a kind of cute but angry weasel. (Be warned!) Fittingly, perhaps, England has

adopted, as unofficial ambassador and strategic diplomatic envoy, a polite, anthropomorphic bear in a red hat and blue duffel coat. North America may have grizzlies; Britain has Paddington.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/29/a-puppet-called-paddington>

**5. The Re-Assemblage of Joseph Cornell.** New Yorker. 5th Jan 2026.

On a street in Paris, just off the Place Vendôme and around the corner from the Ritz, sits a small storefront that, the other day, a passing German tourist referred to as a *bordel*—literally, a bordello and, figuratively, a “massive mess.” The comment was overheard, and translated, by Jasper Sharp, a British-born curator and art historian, who is partly responsible for the massive mess in question—the latest installation in one of two galleries that the New York art dealer Larry Gagosian maintains in Paris. Five plate-glass windows offer a view into a re-creation of the cluttered basement studio in which the twentieth-century American assemblage artist Joseph Cornell once cobbled together the “shadow boxes” that he is best known for. The faux studio—part Santa’s workshop, part dank suburban toolshed, part hoarder’s paradise—may have appeared to need tidying up, but, Sharp said, “you have no idea how much work went into making it look like this.”

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/29/the-re-assemblage-of-joseph-cornell>

**6. Mona Fastvold Knows Her Way Around a Chair.** New Yorker. 5th Jan 2026.

Deep in the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, through an old bank façade, is Gallery 734, the Shaker Retiring Room. Inside, there’s an austere bedstead, ladder-back chairs, a cast-iron stove, and a wooden pegboard running along the walls—all sourced from a village near Albany. A retiring room, according to the Shakers’ “Millennial Laws,” was a place to rest and reflect “in silence, for the space of half an hour, and labor for a sense of the gospel.” On a recent visit to the gallery, the filmmaker Mona Fastvold said, “I feel like I’m inside my world now.”

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/29/mona-fastvold-knows-her-way-around-a-chair>

**7. The Organists Improvising Soundtracks to Silent Films.** New Yorker. 5th Jan 2026.

A hundred and three years on, F. W. Murnau’s “Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror” still haunts the moviegoing unconscious. Newcomers feel shudders of recognition on seeing Murnau’s indelible evocations of a Transylvanian vampire on the prowl: a reverse-negative image of Nosferatu’s carriage clattering through a forest; majestically disquieting sequences of a pestilential ship gliding across the frame; the vampire toting his coffin through the deserted streets of a German town; his shadow seeping along the wall of a stairwell, bony fingers outstretched. Film societies, symphony orchestras, and alternative venues show “Nosferatu” on a regular basis, especially around Halloween. Remakes by Werner Herzog, in 1979, and Robert Eggers, in 2024, have further boosted the fame of the original, although neither matches its sinister lyricism. The appearance of the word

“symphony” in the title highlights the revolutionary musicality of Murnau’s style, his way of turning images into silent song.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/29/the-organists-improvising-soundtracks-to-silent-films>

**8. “Marty Supreme”’s Megawatt Personality.** New Yorker. 5th Jan 2026.

Josh Safdie’s hectic new film “Marty Supreme,” set in 1952, mainly in New York, is, essentially, “Uncut Gems” but with a happy ending. That recklessly exuberant 2019 drama, which Safdie co-directed with his brother, Benny, stars Adam Sandler as a jewelry dealer in Manhattan and a compulsive gambler who takes thrilling risks to pay off his creditors and learns that the house always wins. With “Marty Supreme”—Safdie’s first feature directed without Benny since 2008—the happy ending follows logically from a happy beginning, so to speak. The film’s first scene features a tryst, in a back room of a shoe store, between the protagonist, a twenty-three-year-old salesman named Marty Mauser (Timothée Chalamet), and a young married woman named Rachel (Odessa A’zion).

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/29/marty-supreme-movie-review>

## BIOGRAPHY

**9. What Zohran Mamdani Is Up Against.** New Yorker. 5th Jan 2026.

According to the New York City Department of Records and Information Services, Zohran Mamdani will not actually be the city’s hundred-and-eleventh mayor, as many people have assumed. A historian named Paul Hortenstine recently came across references to a previously unrecorded mayoral term served in 1674, by one Matthias Nicolls. Consequently, on New Year’s Day, after Mamdani places his right hand on the Quran and is sworn in at City Hall, he will become our hundred-and-twelfth mayor—or possibly even our hundred-and-thirty-third, based on the department’s best estimates. “The numbering of New York City ‘Mayors’ has been somewhat arbitrary and inconsistent,” a department official disclosed in a blog post this month. “There may even be other missing Mayors.”

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/29/what-zohran-mamdani-is-up-against>

**10. How Willie Nelson Sees America.** New Yorker. 5th Jan 2026.

When Willie Nelson performs in and around New York, he parks his bus in Weehawken, New Jersey. While the band sleeps at a hotel in midtown Manhattan, he stays on board, playing dominoes, napping. Nelson keeps musician’s hours. For exercise, he does sit-ups, arm rolls, and leg lifts. He jogs in place. “I’m in pretty good shape, physically, for ninety-two,” he told me recently. “Woke up again this morning, so that’s good.”

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/29/willie-nelson-profile>

## BUSINESS

**11. OpenAI faces a make-or-break year in 2026. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.**

Sam Altman is like a juggler on a unicycle. Building all-knowing chatbots powered by cutting-edge artificial-intelligence models is too meek an ambition for OpenAI's boss. To keep his audience rapt, he has thrown ever more balls into the air. Custom chips? Of course. E-commerce? Why not. Business consulting? Too easy. A consumer device? You betcha.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2025/12/29/openai-faces-a-make-or-break-year-in-2026>

**12. China's wind giants are coming for Europe. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.**

Europe is betting big on wind. To curb its greenhouse-gas emissions, the EU has committed to roughly double its installed wind-power capacity by 2030, to 425 gigawatts (GW). Britain's 50GW target for offshore-wind capacity by the same year requires a quadrupling. You might think the continent's manufacturers would be rubbing their hands in anticipation. Instead, they are nervous.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2025/12/30/chinas-wind-giants-are-coming-for-europe>

**13. Despite a record year, airlines are grappling with big challenges. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.**

Rovaniemi airport in Finland, gateway to the home of Father Christmas in Lapland, surpassed 1m arrivals for the first time in 2025. Airlines serving fans of reindeer and ice swimming are not the only ones breaking records. In 2025 the industry's net profits will have hit an all-time high of nearly \$40bn globally, reckons iata, a trade group, far exceeding 2019's pre-pandemic total of \$26bn. Yet plenty of challenges remain.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2025/12/30/despite-a-record-year-airlines-are-grappling-with-big-challenges>

**14. A new-year message from the CEO. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.**

Dear friends and colleagues—this is the 12th time I have written to you at the start of a new year. For the 12th time in a row, I have been surprised by the sheer pace of change in the world. We are facing a perfect storm of technological tsunamis and geopolitical earthquakes. The climate of commerce is altering before our very eyes. I am not going to pretend that the past 12 months have been easy, or that more challenges do not lie ahead. But that is also the nature of business. Remember: if there weren't lows to go with the highs, rollercoasters would be a lot less fun.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2025/12/30/a-new-year-message-from-the-ceo>

## ECONOMICS

**15.** Britain and the EU should be bolder in getting closer. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

Nearly a decade after Britain's reckless vote to leave the European Union, debate over Brexit is back. The intervening years have not been happy. Tortuous negotiation under one Prime Minister, Theresa May, was followed by the hardest possible Brexit deal under another, Boris Johnson, damaging Britain's economy through new barriers to goods exports. Estimates of the resultant loss to British GDP range from an irksome 4% to a dismal 8%. Even the promise of reduced immigration was not kept. As our latest polling confirms, most Britons now think Brexit was a mistake and favour closer ties with the EU, even more so than with America. Some voices in Britain's governing Labour Party are floating the once-taboo idea of rejoining the customs union.

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2025/12/30/britain-and-the-eu-should-be-bolder-in-getting-closer>

**16.** It's fire season for finance, writes Ken Miller. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

IT IS NOW just over 17 years since the financial crash triggered by the Lehman Brothers bankruptcy, and American stockmarkets are again at or near all-time highs. The two main drivers of investor optimism are artificial intelligence and a substantially loosened regulatory environment. These factors, combined with a Wall Street compensation system essentially unchanged since 2008, have now converged to tee up the next financial debacle.

<https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2025/12/30/its-fire-season-for-finance-writes-ken-miller>

**17.** A fragile thaw at the top of the world. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

It WOULD ONCE have taken a week to travel from Leh—the joint capital of Ladakh, a territory in India's far north—to Tangtse, a village less than 50km from India's disputed border with China. Even five years ago, the trip would have eaten up a day. But when your correspondent made the same passage in November—crossing the Chang La pass (pictured) at an altitude of around 17,600 feet, the same as Everest's base camp—the journey was zippy by comparison. Newly paved roads brought him towards the border in about four hours.

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2025/12/29/a-fragile-thaw-at-the-top-of-the-world>

**18.** How China's property crisis helped crash its art market. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

IT WAS ONE of the flashiest art deals in history. In late 2015 Liu Yiqian, a cab driver-turned-property magnate, paid \$170m for Amedeo Modigliani's 1917 painting "Nu

Couché”, the second-highest amount ever paid for a piece of art at auction at the time. And he did so with his Amex card, a fact he happily revealed to the press. All this was meant to show the world that there was more to China’s nouveaux riches than steel and concrete.

<https://www.economist.com/china/2025/12/30/how-chinas-property-crisis-helped-crash-its-art-market>

**19. China’s museum boom, take two.** Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

Niko wang, a man in his 30s with thick black glasses, has his own marketing business. This affords him the flexibility to go to museums during the week—an essential ability for culture vultures in China. Its big museums have become almost too crowded to visit on weekends and holidays. On a recent Thursday morning at a new branch of the Zhejiang provincial museum in Hangzhou he pointed to a digital sign indicating that there were just 400 people in the museum at that moment, well below capacity. “What a treat!” Mr Wang said. Booking entries for China’s most popular museums, he sighed, is now almost as difficult as buying train seats during the annual crush for the Lunar New Year. You need to be logged onto the museums’ apps, with a fast trigger finger, as soon as tickets become available.

<https://www.economist.com/china/2025/12/29/chinas-museum-boom-take-two>

**20. Brexit has deepened the British economy’s flaws and dulled its strengths.** Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

Covid-19 was a gift to Brexiteers. After years of argument over the Vote Leave campaign’s irreconcilable promises, the pandemic finally redirected public attention elsewhere. Boris Johnson, a former prime minister, used it to claim that “Brexit helped save lives”, based on a dubious assertion that leaving the European Union hastened the vaccine roll-out. Yet perhaps the longest-lasting dividend for Brexiteers has been in the pandemic’s effects on economic statistics. By scrambling almost every relevant data series, it has made it harder to assess Brexit’s effects.

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2025/12/30/brexit-has-deepened-the-british-economys-flaws-and-dulled-its-strengths>

**21. America’s economy looks set to accelerate.** Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

“ITHINK 2026 can be a very good year.” What could be a slurred festive toast is in fact the cheerful forecast of Scott Bessent, America’s treasury secretary, who expects the calendar’s turn to herald faster economic growth. His optimism has foundation. The effects of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (BBB), a tax-cutting law enacted in July, will soon start to be felt. Americans will receive refunds that reflect retroactive tax cuts on income from 2025. They will also find that levies on monthly earnings have fallen. According to Piper Sandler, an investment bank, these “two years of tax cuts in one” are worth about \$191bn.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2025/12/30/americas-economy-looks-set-to-accelerate>

**22.**Forget affordability. Europe has an availability crisis. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

IT is fashionable to claim that much of the rich world is suffering from an affordability crisis. The evidence presented ranges from the high prices of eggs in America and rice in Japan to costly housing just about everywhere. Europe has not been immune to such worries. In May respondents from across the eu told Eurobarometer, an official survey, that tackling inflation should be the European Parliament's highest priority, making it more important than defence, poverty and jobs.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2025/12/30/forget-affordability-europe-has-an-availability-crisis>

**23.**China's property woes could last until 2030. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

Since 2021, as the Chinese property market has descended into crisis, analysts have paid close attention to its woes—a task that is now becoming increasingly difficult. In mid-December Beijing's housing authority announced that it would stamp out social-media accounts responsible for negative posts; thousands have since been closed or suspended. Estate agents are being pressed to keep ugly intelligence under wraps. In November two of the country's best private sources of property data stopped providing monthly home-sales figures, reportedly at the command of the government.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2025/12/30/chinas-property-woes-could-last-until-2030>

**24.**RedBird, a small firm doing big media deals. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

Even a Hollywood blockbuster rarely involves such a varied cast. Soon after Netflix said in early December that it would acquire most of Warner Bros Discovery, Paramount swooped in with a hostile bid. Its offer of \$108bn for the whole of its rival film studio is backed not just by David Ellison, Paramount's chief executive, and his father Larry, a tech tycoon and one of the richest men in the world. Also on board are Apollo, a private-equity shop; several Gulf sovereign-wealth funds—and RedBird, an investment firm with a mere \$12bn in assets under management.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2025/12/30/redbird-a-small-firm-doing-big-media-deals>

**25.**Investors head into 2026 remarkably optimistic. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

As ever, the biggest question for investors to ponder over the coming year is an impossible one: are share prices set to soar or plunge? The answer will determine not only whether shareholders have a brilliant or dreadful time, but whether stockpickers have made winning choices and asset allocators have chosen wise portfolio weights. Individual investors have the luxury of ignoring the question and remembering, from previous booms and busts, that buy-and-hold is a difficult strategy to beat. Professionals, though, are paid to do just that, and so must attempt to guess the future. What, then, do they make of the prospects for 2026?

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2025/12/30/investors-head-into-2026-remarkably-optimistic>

**26.**Editor's note: The new labour codes are a gift for capital. *Frontline*. Vol.42. No-24. 1-15 Jan 2026.

Let me begin with the phrase that has now become a meme: “aap chronology samajhiye” (Understand the chronology). In 2019-20, the new Labour Codes were passed in Parliament. They were, however, not implemented due to stiff resistance from the majority of trade unions, including the RSS-affiliated Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh. In June 2025, the country’s most disruptive, hasty, and opaque electoral roll revision was launched in Bihar. In November, the Bihar election brought the BJP and its allies to power with a sweeping majority. And, almost immediately, on November 21, the five-year-old Labour Codes were notified.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/economy/india-new-labour-codes-worker-rights-impact-chronology/article70411869.ece>

**27.**The state is withdrawing from protecting unorganised workers. *Frontline*. Vol.42. No-24. 1-15 Jan 2026.

The new Labour Codes on industrial relations, wages, occupational health and safety, and social security actively invisibilise workers in the unorganised sector even as they claim to “universalise” social security and minimum wages. These workers constitute an estimated 93 per cent of the workforce and produce about 65 per cent of the country’s GDP.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/economy/labour-codes-worker-rights-india-unorganised-sector-reforms/article70410728.ece>

**28.**Dictatorship of the employer?. *Frontline*. Vol.42. No-24. 1-15 Jan 2026.

On November 21, the Union government issued notifications bringing into force four Labour Codes that had been passed between 2019 and 2021: the Code on Wages, 2019; the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code (OSH Code), 2020; the Social Security Code, 2020; and the Industrial Relations (IR) Code, 2020. The four Labour Codes, presented as anti-colonial “labour reform”, essentially constitute a reorientation of the state’s role in mediating class relations in the country. That Corporate India has largely hailed the Labour Codes indicates whose interests they serve. Trade unions have taken this as an attack on the working class, and indications are that the coming months will see a concerted challenge on the streets.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/economy/labour-codes-workers-rights-corporate-power/article70403151.ece>

**29.**India’s Labour Market. *Economic & Political Weekly*. Vol. 61. No-1. 03 Jan 2026.

India’s labour market today is marked by a mix of progress and precarity, a combination that makes interpretation difficult and policy action urgent. On the surface, the country is

undergoing a positive shift. Labour force participation has increased across demographic groups, with women accounting for nearly 70% of all new entrants since 2018. Output growth remains high by global standards. Services continue to drive the national growth story, while a renewed industrial strategy signals the state's effort to broaden the base of productive employment. However, as the five papers in this special issue demonstrate, these encouraging signals rest on structural weaknesses that hinder the labour market's ability to generate secure and meaningful work. The deeper story is one of rising participation but stagnant job quality, strong output growth but weak employment elasticity in the formal sector, and higher productivity in select sectors but persistent underemployment for much of the workforce. Understanding this complex labour market pattern is essential for imagining a credible future of work in India.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2026/1/review-labour-and-employment/indias-labour-market.html>

**30. An Employment-centred Perspective of Development.** Economic & Political Weekly. Vol. 61. No-1. 03 Jan 2026.

This paper proceeds by asking whether gross domestic product (GDP) growth is indeed the best way to assess the performance of an economy. After discussing the alternatives to the “commodity fetishism” of GDP growth, such as the human development index, the paper proposes a combination of indicators led by employment growth. The importance of choosing an appropriate indicator of a country’s economic performance becomes clear when we discuss the paradox of Indian growth—a sustained period of high growth combined with high growth of unemployment. We discuss what accounts for this paradox, particularly the role of rising capital intensity and “creative destruction,” the competition for survival under capitalism. The paper also parenthetically discusses two blind spots, underemployment and temporary migrant employment, which make our statistics quite fragile for assessing the employment status of the economy.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2026/1/review-labour-and-employment/employment-centred-perspective-development.html>

**31. Technology and Employment.** Economic & Political Weekly. Vol. 61. No-1. 03 Jan 2026.

Supply chain disruptions and a destabilised multilateral trading order have long-term implications for a large developing country like India. In response, India is currently in the process of further incentivising the domestic industry for expanding production, focusing on sectors with higher vulnerability, besides building opportunities for job creation across industrial sectors. This is in continuation of the previous policy stance on “Make in India” and the subsequent emphasis on self-reliance through the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. In recent times, focus has also been given to leveraging the large domestic market for preserving economic growth by incentivising and encouraging consumers in the spirit of swadeshi. The International Monetary Fund (2024) states that in a post-2020 scenario, supply chain resilience, national security, and geopolitical concerns became the prime motive for industrial policy interventions, in contrast to the post-2008 scenario

where climate change and competitiveness became central. However, India's continuous emphasis on industrialisation is also driven by factors beyond the immediate challenges.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2026/1/review-labour-and-employment/technology-and-employment.html>

**32.** Understanding Women's Work in India, 1983–2024. *Economic & Political Weekly*. Vol. 61. No-1. 03 Jan 2026.

Across the world, women have consistently participated in the labour market at lower rates than men. In 2023, the global female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) was 49%, compared to 73% for men, creating a gender gap of 25 percentage points. This gap is not uniform and varies by region. While sub-Saharan Africa has the highest FLFPR, South Asia has one of the lowest FLFPRs at just 32%, with a large gender gap of 45 percentage points. This wide gap reflects the persistence of poverty and educational as well as deep-rooted social and cultural barriers that limit women's access to economic opportunities in the region. In contrast, regions like Latin America and the Caribbean, East Asia and the Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia have narrower gender gaps. This is partly because of higher levels of education among women, more progressive gender norms, and supportive policies, such as paid parental leave and access to childcare services (World Bank 2019).

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2026/1/review-labour-and-employment/understanding-womens-work-india-1983-2024.html>

**33.** Rise of Unpaid Family Workers. *Economic & Political Weekly*. Vol. 61. No-1. 03 Jan 2026. Recent rounds of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) of India report a sharp increase in both the labour force participation rate (LFPR) and the worker population ratio (WPR). The trend has been persisting since 2017–18. The rise is driven by increased employment across different demographic groups, such as age, gender, sector, etc. Alongside, this has managed to push the female LFPR up since 2017–18, reversing the earlier downward trend.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2026/1/review-labour-and-employment/rise-unpaid-family-workers.html>

## EDUCATION

**34.** The Quarter-Century Project. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Vol.72. No-9. 2nd Jan 2026. As 2025 comes to a close, The Chronicle's podcast, College Matters, is taking stock of higher education's quarter century. The 2000s thus far have tested colleges, their leaders, and their faculty members in ways large and small. From the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, to the Great Recession of the late aughts, to the recent dawning of artificial intelligence, higher education and the world have endured enormous stressors,

which have changed them both in ways that are often difficult to measure — but are nonetheless acutely felt.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-quarter-century-project>

**35. The Shakedown.** Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol.72. No-9. 2nd Jan 2026.

On the morning of Thursday, July 31, James B. Milliken was enjoying a round of golf at the remote Sand Hills club in western Nebraska when his cell phone buzzed. Milliken was still days away from taking the helm of the sprawling University of California system, but his new office was on the line with disturbing news: The Trump administration was freezing hundreds of millions of dollars of research funding at the University of California at Los Angeles, UC's biggest campus. Milliken quickly packed up and made the five-hour drive to Denver to catch the next flight to California.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-shakedown>

**36. The Ambition Trap.** Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol.72. No-9. 2nd Jan 2026.

The leaders of the University of Tulsa had some bad news to share. The institution was staring down a \$31-million deficit in its 2026 budget. To close the gap, it cut \$20 million, mostly in contracts with food-service and other providers. It shed \$1.5 million in upper-administration costs, laid off about 40 staff members, and imposed a three-year hiring freeze, the chief financial and chief operating officers explained in a September town-hall meeting with faculty and staff members.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-ambition-trap>

**37. 'We're being DOGE-ed': Sweeping Buyout Plan Rattles the New School's Faculty.** Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol.72. No-9. 2nd Jan 2026.

Professors at the New School say they are used to crises — a round of austerity after the pandemic, a strike by part-time faculty members, a fire in a dorm. But they're now reeling from a crisis on a scale few faculties ever face. About 40 percent of the full-time professors at the institution received letters in early December offering them separation packages or early retirement as part of leaders' attempts to address a budget deficit. If they do not accept the offers by mid-month, the paperwork stated, they could face "involuntary reduction" in the New Year on less favorable terms.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/were-being-doge-ed-sweeping-buyout-plan-rattles-the-new-schools-faculty>

**38. At the U. of Austin, a Raft of Departures Leaves More Questions Than Answers.** Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol.72. No-9. 2nd Jan 2026.

At the start of 2025, the University of Austin had a lot to celebrate. It had opened its doors to its first class of students. It had raised over \$214 million. And though it had drawn a lot of initial criticism, the news cycle had moved on from intellectual takedowns

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/at-the-u-of-austin-a-raft-of-departures-leaves-more-questions-than-answers>

**39.** A University Gave Guest Speakers a List of Banned Words. Was It Just Complying With State Law?. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol.72. No-9. 2nd Jan 2026.

After she agreed to give a book talk at Weber State University, Darcie Little Badger was sent a document titled “Speaker Information Request.” It asked Little Badger for personal and logistical information, all fairly standard for a guest speaker, but at the bottom of the page there was something unusual: a list of banned words and phrases.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/a-university-gave-guest-speakers-a-list-of-banned-words-was-it-just-complying-with-state-law>

**40.** The Inevitable Rise of Right-Wing DEI. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol.72. No-9. 2nd Jan 2026.

Aspecter is haunting the university — the specter of the godless professor.

He’s been with us a long time, this corrupting figure of conservative demonology. In 1949, an undergraduate, William F. Buckley Jr., would agonize in the pages of the Yale Daily News

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-inevitable-rise-of-right-wing-dei>

**41.** The Fraught Task of Hiring Pro-Zionist Professors. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol.72. No-9. 2nd Jan 2026.

Have you ever met a Zionist Foucauldian? Some 30 years ago, I half-jokingly asked my fellow graduate students in a social-theory course if they had ever encountered such a creature. No one had. The question amused them. That query came to mind as I read the Columbia University

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/how-do-you-solve-a-problem-like-columbia>

**42.** Academic Politics at Their Most Counterproductive. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol.72. No-9. 2nd Jan 2026.

The annual meeting of the American Historical Association used to be a pretty staid affair. At the first one I attended, in Washington in 1987, I brought along my girlfriend then, a journalist, and I still remember her initial reaction: “I’ve never seen so many badly dressed middle-aged men together in the same place in my life.” These men, mostly hired to tenure-track positions before the (first) collapse of the academic job market in the 1970s, treated the conference as a class reunion of sorts, jovially greeting old friends. A very different vibe came from the graduate students who were there for first-round job interviews — often held in hotel bedrooms with candidates and search committees alike perched awkwardly on the edge of beds. Anxiety pulsed off them in waves.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/academic-politics-at-their-most-counterproductive>

**43. Dyslexia and the Reading Wars.** New Yorker. 5th Jan 2026.

In 2024, my niece Caroline received a Ph.D. in gravitational-wave physics. Her research interests include “the impact of model inaccuracies on biases in parameters recovered from gravitational wave data” and “Petrov type, principal null directions, and Killing tensors of slowly rotating black holes in quadratic gravity.” I watched a little of her dissertation defense, on Zoom, and was lost as soon as she’d finished introducing herself. She and her husband now live in Italy, where she has a postdoctoral appointment.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/29/dyslexia-and-the-reading-wars>

**44. Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan bill: reimagining higher education governance in India.**

University News. Vol.64. No-1. 5th-11th Jan 2026. Page No 3-12.

The governance of higher education in India is currently at a critical juncture. Increasing global integration, rapid expansion, and rising diversity of institutions have intensified concerns about quality, accountability, and coordination. Therefore, policy debates have increasingly recognised that governance structures, rather than institutional performance alone, drive and shape system-wide outcomes. Against this context, the proposed Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (VBSA) Bill represents an important attempt to reconfigure India's higher education regulatory framework.

**45. Exploring colonial hangover's other side.** University News. Vol.64. No-1. 5th-11th Jan 2026. Page No 13-16.

Thomas Macaulay's Utilitarianism-driven Education Minute of 1835 is immeasurably condescending both in its tone and content and can easily provoke repulsive feelings even in the quietest of the Indian minds. It virtually sought enslavement of the Indian minds through the medium of education. And it provided the right grist for Prime Minister Modi's Ramnath Goenka Memorial Lecture in New Delhi last month (17 November 2025). His was again a sparkling oration which threw off some sparks alongside projection of his own set of colloquialisms. He has set a ten-year limit for bidding the final good-bye to the colonial mindset.

**46. Higher Education in India and the United States: a comparative analysis of resources, assessment, governance, transparency, and curricular flexibility.** University News. Vol.64. No-1. 5th-11th Jan 2026. Page No 17-20.

India and the United States host some of the world's largest and most diverse higher education systems. Any comparison must therefore account for breadth and heterogeneity: India comprises central and state universities, Institutes of National Importance, autonomous colleges, and a rapidly growing private sector, etc. The United States includes public multi-campus systems, private non-profit and for-profit institutions, liberal arts colleges, and research universities. Rather than rank systems, this article offers a thematic comparison across policy-relevant dimensions that influence student learning, faculty work, and institutional outcomes. The emphasis is on structures that shape incentives: funding architecture, assessment of cultures, governance roles, accreditation and quality assurance, and the degree of curricular flexibility granted to learners and instructors.

**47.** Five years of National Education Policy: transforming India's learning landscape. University News. Vol.64. No-1. 5th-11th Jan 2026. Page No 21-22.

India's education system has seen significant changes over the past five years since the National Education Policy (NEP)- 2020 was introduced. Touted as a significant reform, the policy aims to make learning more inclusive, adaptable, and based on Indian principles while meeting global standards. Looking back, we are seeing signs of progress, especially in more flexibility in higher education, quality education through large-scale teachers' training programmes, etc.

**48.** Integrated teacher education programme: awareness, importance and challenges. University News. Vol.64. No-1. 5th-11th Jan 2026. Page No 23-27.

The education landscape is ever evolving and dynamic in nature, and teacher education programs should be upgraded to match the futuristic educational demands. The New Education Policy (2020) outlines the Integrated Teacher Education Programme, which has emerged as a significant initiative aimed at bridging gaps in teacher training by integrating comprehensive pedagogical methods and multidisciplinary knowledge. The course will contribute to restoring and upgrading the whole teacher education system. Integrated Teacher Education Programme is a dual-major bachelor's degree programme, such as B.A/B.Com./B.Sc.Ed integrated courses of 4 year duration divided into eight semesters, with one major in Education and the other in a disciplinary/interdisciplinary branch of knowledge (Nial et al., 2024).

## EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

**49.** OpenAI's cash burn will be one of the big bubble questions of 2026. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

Stockmarket investors may have ended the year worried about the bubbly valuations of generative-AI firms. But private markets still appeared to be living in a parallel universe. In 2025 the venture-capital (VC) industry poured \$150bn into big AI startups such as OpenAI and Anthropic, far more than beneficiaries of the previous VC boom received in 2021. Such is its confidence that OpenAI, maker of ChatGPT, believes it can single-handedly tap private investors for as much as \$100bn in 2026. That would be almost four times the amount raised by the biggest stockmarket listing ever.

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2025/12/30/openais-cash-burn-will-be-one-of-the-big-bubble-questions-of-2026>

**50.** Dehumanised Decisions. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol. 61. No-1. 03 Jan 2026.

Israel's army has developed artificial intelligence (AI)-based programmes and automated systems known as "Lavender" and "Where's Daddy?" to target Palestinians. Lavender, an AI-enabled database, assigns risk scores to Gazans based on patterns in their personal data (for example, communication and social connections) to identify "suspected Hamas or

Islamic Jihad operatives" (Weise and Langer 2024). A second system, "Where's Daddy?" uses mobile phone location tracking to notify operators when a marked individual is at home (Abraham 2024). It was reportedly designed to "look for [targets] in their family homes," since suspects "were bombed in homes without hesitation, as a first option" (Tharoor 2024).

<https://www.epw.in/index.php/journal/2026/1/commentary/dehumanised-decisions.html>

## ENVIRONMENT

### 51. Photo-ops in a banana republic. Frontline. Vol.42. No-24. 1-15 Jan 2026.

One of the booth-level agents of the BJP from my constituency in Delhi is a property broker and builder. On the face of it, we have very civil relations, occasionally chatting during morning walks, exchanging pleasantries, and discussing the weather, which is a euphemism for pollution levels these days. He speaks freely, I imagine, as he has openly shared his desire to see a ghetto at one edge of the park, which has mostly Muslim residents, cleared out because he insists it is "illegal". But he sees nothing illegal in selling flats that have come up in areas officially marked as green belts. Business, he says with satisfaction, is better than it was during the AAP era, which ended in February 2025.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/columns/delhi-bjp-triple-engine-pollution-real-estate-failure/article70407044.ece>

## FOOD

### 52. Restaurants are changing their menus for the age of Ozempic. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

Otto's, a restaurant in London, is known for serving generous portions of indulgent dishes: lobster, canard à la presse and burgers heaped with caviar and foie gras. But when a regular customer informed Otto Tepassé, the owner, that he was taking weight-loss medication and would be dining out less frequently, Mr Tepassé decided to adapt. The restaurant launched a menu of "exquisite bites" such as pan-fried veal. "You get all the luxury," says Mr Tepassé, "but in small quantities."

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2025/12/29/restaurants-are-changing-their-menus-for-the-age-of-ozempic>

### 53. At the New Babbo, It's Batali Minus Batali. New Yorker. 5th Jan 2026.

It's nearly impossible to eat a meal at Babbo, the recently revived Greenwich Village trattoria, without being pummelled by reminders of its past. This can be quite a pleasant

experience. For nearly two decades, beginning in 1998, Babbo was one of the most coveted reservations in New York, reshaping how the city—and, arguably, the entire country—understood Italian cuisine and modern restaurant dining writ large. More to the point, it was just a marvellous place to be. It felt essential, intoxicating, urgent, the party-crowded bar area giving way to gracefully spacious dining rooms, the smell of rosemary and wine in the air, the honeyed lighting, the soigné service, the irreverent soundtrack of roaring classic rock. Babbo was the flagship restaurant of Mario Batali, and it became synonymous with his celebrity: charismatic, edgy, expansive, just on the edge of overwhelming. If you know any of this story, you know the rest of it. In late 2017, Batali—always a figure of larger-than-life appetites—was accused, by multiple women, of sexual misconduct. Over the next few years, he stepped back from his restaurants and retreated from public life. Most of his roughly two dozen restaurants eventually closed; Babbo remained open but failed to shake off its association with Batali's tarnished name.

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/the-food-scene/at-the-new-babbo-its-batali-minus-batali>

## HEALTH

54. Incentive (Mis)alignment in India's Deceased Organ Donation Value Chain. *Economic & Political Weekly*. Vol. 61. No-1. 03 Jan 2026.

Deceased organ donation, also known as cadaveric organ donation, holds the potential to save thousands of lives. Yet, despite the critical need for organs, the rate of deceased donations in India remains strikingly low at less than one per million population (Table 1), which is far below countries like Spain (over 45 per million), the United States (US), and even some low- and middle-income nations. The situation is not just alarming but demands a detailed exploration of the factors contributing to this crisis, particularly the pervasive incentive misalignment among stakeholders, which undermines efforts to elevate donation rates.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2026/1/commentary/incentive-misalignment-indias-deceased-organ.html>

## HISTORY

55. Tito: Britain's Man in Belgrade. *History Today*. Vol.76. No-1. Jan 2026.

Josip Broz Tito was a man who demanded attention. Estranged from Moscow and wary of Washington, communist yet non-aligned, the Yugoslav president worked hard to carve a role between East and West in postwar Europe. Nestled amid Nato's southern flank and offering access to the warm water ports of the Mediterranean, Tito's Yugoslavia was of interest to decision makers in both blocs. Yet in the shadow of superpower rivalry, Tito

found an unlikely ally in successive British governments, who sought to maintain Britain's declining world influence while countering the spread of Soviet power.

<https://www.historytoday.com/archive/feature/tito-britains-man-belgrade>

**56.** The French Revolution: A Political History' by John Hardman review. History Today. Vol.76. No-1. Jan 2026.

What was revolutionary about the French Revolution? Contemporary critics such as Edmund Burke lamented that France's tyro politicians had squandered a golden opportunity to renew with a useable past. Had they found nothing to salvage from their own traditions, he urged, they might yet have imitated 'wise examples' available abroad, notably the constitutional model of their British neighbours. Instead, they were hazarding an untested path woe-betided with epochal danger. Such auguries, however, tended to disregard the revolution's shock-of-the-new logic and appeal.

<https://www.historytoday.com/archive/review/french-revolution-political-history-john-hardman-review>

**57.** Oswald of Northumbria: An English Saint in the Alps. History Today. Vol.76. No-1. Jan 2026.

Outside Bad Kleinkirchheim, a small and remote Alpine spa resort in Carinthia, is a hamlet called Sankt Oswald. It is named after the dedicatee of its church, the seventh-century English king and early Christian saint, Oswald of Northumbria. There is also a small chapel dedicated to Oswald on the other side of the valley, next to the stream that bears his name. And if you follow the stream up into the mountains you come to the Oswaldeck, a promontory that looks over the valley (if you squint, you might even spot the St Oswald water treatment plant). The pervasive presence of an English saint in a remote Austrian valley might seem surprising, but this Sankt Oswald is not an isolated case. There are more than 200 churches dedicated to Oswald of Northumbria, which makes him one of the most popular English saints. Yet well over half of those churches are not in the British Isles, and the majority of continental churches dedicated to him are concentrated in the southern part of the German-speaking world. This is surprising.

<https://www.historytoday.com/archive/feature/oswald-northumbria-english-saint-alps>

**58.** The Maharajah's English Tutor. History Today. Vol.76. No-1. Jan 2026.

In 1877 H.E. Sullivan, the British representative at the court of the Travancore maharajah, ventured into somewhat delicate territory: the education of the state's young princes. As was later recorded, he 'condemned' the existing arrangements as offering mere book learning, without 'training up and forming' the children's minds. What the British agent wanted, instead, was for the princes to be in the regular company of a 'man of enlightened liberal views', 'not only in school' but on their 'rides and walks and travels', so that 'education, in its highest sense, would be going on constantly'. A 'native' master would not do, for:

<https://www.historytoday.com/archive/feature/maharajahs-english-tutor>

**59. The Wreck of the San José.** History Today. Vol.76. No-1. Jan 2026.

On 8 June 1708, near the Caribbean coast of present-day Colombia, British warships destroyed the *San José*, the flagship of a fleet carrying treasure from South America for Spain. As the confused exchange of broadsides rumbled into the night, the dark and the smoke were split by a huge flash: an officer on another Spanish ship later recalled seeing 'a great fire ... with enormous flames'. A stray shot or spark had ignited the gunpowder aboard the galleon, which exploded and immediately sank. Today, it is thought to be the world's richest shipwreck, worth an estimated £15 billion.

<https://www.historytoday.com/archive/feature/wreck-san-jose>

**60. How Has Public History Changed Since 1951?.** History Today. Vol.76. No-1. Jan 2026.

I can't remember when I first read *History Today*: probably not in 1951, when I was seven, but soon afterwards my parents bought me a subscription, since history is the only subject I really enjoy. I have read every issue since, mainly because *History Today* covers all periods, areas, and aspects of our discipline. It was – and has remained – the essence of what we now call 'public history'.

<https://www.historytoday.com/archive/head-head/how-has-public-history-changed-1951>

**61. The Death of Charles the Bad.** History Today. Vol.76. No-1. Jan 2026.

One night in January 1354 a group of armed men burst into a room in a Normandy inn and dragged the man asleep there naked from his bed. He begged for his life on his knees. He offered money. He offered land. People counted 80 stab wounds in his body the next day.

<https://www.historytoday.com/archive/months-past/death-charles-bad>

**62. New Year Readers' Resolutions.** History Today. Vol.76. No-1. Jan 2026.

'Do not praise the day before the evening', the proverb says. By the same principle, it's probably not wise to write about the success of last year's New Year's resolutions until the old year has safely passed. Although 2025 is not quite complete at the time of writing, however, I feel able to say already that my year was much improved by managing to keep one of last year's resolutions.

<https://www.historytoday.com/archive/out-margins/new-year-readers-resolutions>

**63. 'The Revolution to Come' and 'Revolutions: A New History' review.** History Today. Vol.76. No-1. Jan 2026.

Much of the world's population lives under revolutionary regimes. Cambodia, China, France, Greece, Haiti, Iran, Ireland, Mexico, Nicaragua, the United States, even the United Kingdom, that distant descendant of the Glorious Revolution: all entered their modern histories with a revolution. And that's not even to speak of decolonisation in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean, the post-Soviet sphere after 1991, or the ambiguous aftershocks of the Arab Spring in 2011. Most countries have

put their revolution behind them. Others simply cannot stop rehashing it, the US most conspicuously (and not just thanks to the semiquincentennial in 2026). All helped to make revolution a hallmark of what it means to be modern.

<https://www.historytoday.com/archive/review/revolution-come-and-revolutions-new-history-review>

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### 64. Netanyahu wins bigly from his meeting with Trump. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

Binyamin Netanyahu might consider hiring Donald Trump as his campaign manager. The Israeli prime minister is facing a tough re-election battle in 2026. On his visit to Mar-a-Lago, the American president's Florida home, on December 29th, Mr Trump gushed that Mr Netanyahu is "a wartime prime minister at the highest level". With others in charge, he insisted, "Israel right now would not exist." Israel's beleaguered prime minister could not have written better election slogans himself.

<https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2025/12/30/netanyahu-wins-bigly-from-his-meeting-with-trump>

### 65. The Baltic is becoming a battleground between NATO and Russia. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

Compared with Russia's hulking nuclear-powered submarines, Sweden's a26, at just 66 metres long, is a compact model. But what the Saab-built sub lacks in size it makes up for in stealth and surveillance abilities. A portal built into its bow lets it deploy underwater drones, sensors or divers onto the seabed. For the Baltic Sea's murky waters, and for the cold war unfolding beneath them, the a26 delivers the most bang for the buck. That at least was the conclusion Poland's government reached on November 26th, when it decided to buy three of the vessels for an estimated \$2.8bn.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2025/12/23/the-baltic-is-becoming-a-battleground-between-nato-and-russia>

### 66. Europe's generals are warning people to prepare for war. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

"We have to accept losing our children." For France's citizens, the statement in November by General Fabien Mandon, head of their armed forces, fell like a thunderbolt. The possibility of a conflict with Russia by 2030, he said, meant that everyone—not just the army—had to be ready; France would be vulnerable if it was not prepared to suffer. Yet his words were met with indignation and incredulity.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2025/12/30/europe-s-generals-are-warning-people-to-prepare-for-war>

**67. Russia is blasting Odessa to throttle Ukraine's economy. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.**

ODESSA HAS endured a lot over the past four years, but in December it experienced a new level of assault. On the night of December 11th-12th Russia launched an unprecedented blitz, pummelling the city with a record 300 drones, bombs and missiles. By morning the region was without electricity, water or heat, and a ship in the port was burning. In the days that followed blackouts became routine, and many denizens relied on pop-up soup kitchens for meals. On December 18th Russia added the threat of physical isolation by striking the Mayaky bridge, a key point on a highway that links the city to Moldova and Europe. That attack killed a mother and injured three children. The next day the Russians hit civilian port infrastructure near the city, killing eight more, including a lorry driver waiting to load grain.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2025/12/28/russia-is-blasting-odessa-to-throttle-ukraines-economy>

**68. It's time to rethink Britain's relationship with the EU. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.**

THIS WEEK marks the fifth anniversary of the trade and co-operation agreement (TCA) that sealed Britain's departure from the European Union. In June it will be ten years since the Brexit referendum. It is a good moment to consider how Brexit has worked and where relations go next.

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2025/12/30/its-time-to-rethink-britains-relationship-with-the-eu>

**69. Patriotism tests loom for big business. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.**

FOR CHINESE fans of table tennis, even global tournaments have a cosy feel. China so dominates the sport that many international matches amount to a contest between "our Chinese" and "their Chinese". Fans in China proudly watch their country's champions compete with members of the "ping-pong foreign legion", their fond nickname for Chinese-born aces who, realising they will never make their national squad, emigrate to play under other flags. At the Paris Olympics in 2024 more than a dozen table-tennis players representing European, Latin American and other countries were Chinese-born and -trained.

<https://www.economist.com/international/2025/12/30/patriotism-tests-loom-for-big-business>

**LAW**

**70. Making Forest Conservation Work for Forest Communities. India Forum. 5th Jan 2026.**

The Forest Rights Act (FRA), which was passed by Parliament in 2006, could fundamentally change the lives of adivasis and other forest-dwelling communities who are

dependent on forests for their livelihood and are considered to be at the bottom of our social hierarchy.

<https://www.theindiaforum.in/environment/making-forest-conservation-work-forest-communities>

**71. The Retributive Turn: How Indian Courts Transform Pre-trial Detention into Punishment.** Economic & Political Weekly. Vol. 61. No-1. 03 Jan 2026.

Prisons are primarily intended for convicts. However, in India, approximately 70% of prisoners are undertrial detainees (NCRB 2020), that is, individuals held in custody by judicial order while awaiting trial (Heard and Fair 2019). As a matter of principle, personal liberty should not be deprived unless a person is found guilty through due process. Yet, pre-trial detention—a form of incarceration involving the deprivation of liberty (Murphy 2008)—can be imposed without a completed trial, often bypassing rigorous standards of proof. The United Nations (1988) defines a detained person as “any person deprived of personal liberty except as a result of the conviction of an offence.” Unlike post-conviction imprisonment, pre-trial detention does not require a formal determination of guilt (Wiseman 2014). Simply put, when an accused person is brought before the court after arrest and judicial custody is ordered, it constitutes pre-trial detention.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2026/1/insight/retributive-turn.html>

## LITERATURE

**72. The Welfare State.** New Yorker. 5th Jan 2026.

The world beyond the ridgeline was a wall of gray cloud. One could look down to the left or the right at a forty-five-degree angle and see only gray. From the mist came loud moos and the clatter of cowbells. The American was too frightened to move.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/29/the-welfare-state-fiction-nell-zink>

**73. Stone, Biance**

Memory Palace. New Yorker. 5th Jan 2026.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/29/memory-palace-bianca-stone-poem>

**74. Bang, Mary Jo**

It's Getting Lighter. New Yorker. 5th Jan 2026.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/29/its-getting-lighter-mary-jo-bang-poem>

## MILITARY SCIENCE

75. A sham poll in Myanmar opens a new phase of military rule. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

Tayzar San is the most wanted man in Myanmar. In 2021 the wiry and bespectacled doctor led the first protest against the military junta that had toppled Myanmar's democratically elected government. In the years since then, he has avoided capture, aided by a supportive population; he pops up in settlements across the country to lead demonstrations against the junta. In early December he appeared in Mandalay, the second-biggest city, to protest against the regime's latest ploy: a sham election that began on December 28th. Delighted locals applauded and flashed the three-finger salute (a symbol of opposition to military rule) before their hero slipped back into the shadows.

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2025/12/24/a-sham-poll-in-myanmar-opens-a-new-phase-of-military-rule>

76. A lightning advance by separatists has reshaped Yemen's civil war. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

On December 30th the United Arab Emirates said it would withdraw its troops from Yemen after Saudi Arabia backed the Yemeni government's demand for their departure. Its military presence in the country was small, and it made no announcement about a pullback by the Southern Transitional Council.

<https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2025/12/30/a-lightning-advance-by-separatists-has-reshaped-yemens-civil-war>

## POLITICAL SCIENCE & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

77. Brazil's President Lula should not run again. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

Latin America's biggest country had a tumultuous 2025. Brazil jailed an ex-president, Jair Bolsonaro, for plotting a coup. President Donald Trump claimed, falsely, that this was a stitch-up, and slapped hefty punitive tariffs on Brazilian goods. Brazil's left-wing president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, stood up to Mr Trump, and persuaded him largely to back down. Lula, as he is known, is now in a strong position to win re-election in October.

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2025/12/30/brazils-president-lula-should-not-run-again>

78. America's affordability crisis is (mostly) a mirage. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

The IRONY is almost painful enough to make you pity the president. Donald Trump won the 2024 election in part by fulminating about inflation, which he blamed on the Democratic Party. He pledged to bring down prices “very, very rapidly” and “Make America Affordable Again”. As Mr. Trump was surely aware, that promise was undeliverable; an economy-wide fall in prices is unprecedented outside a deep recession. Besides, since taking office, Mr. Trump’s most noteworthy policy on prices has been to raise them further, by adding punishing tariffs to the cost of America’s imports.

<https://www.economist.com/briefing/2025/12/30/americas-affordability-crisis-is-mostly-a-mirage>

**79.** Australia’s prime minister gets booed in Bondi. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

A fortnight has passed since two gunmen inspired by Islamic State (IS), a jihadist terrorist group, fired on people celebrating Hanukkah at Bondi Beach in Sydney, killing 15. Alongside the grief have come bitter recriminations. The conservative Liberal-National coalition, Australia’s main opposition, is heaping blame on the Labor Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese. It says he failed to fight antisemitism that has mounted in Australia since Hamas attacked Israel on October 7th, 2023. Foreigners point fingers, too. In the immediate aftermath of the massacre, Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel’s prime minister, accused Mr Albanese’s government of taking “no action” to counter hatred of Jews.

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2025/12/30/australias-prime-minister-gets-booed-in-bondi>

**80.** Cults of personality pervade all levels of Indian politics. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

NARENDRA MODI, India’s prime minister, is a once-in-a-generation political phenomenon. He commands support for his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) across class, caste and language. He is the face of his party in national elections, state elections and even local elections. In India’s Westminster-style parliamentary system, only a lucky few have the chance to vote for him directly. But after nearly 12 years of his prime ministership it is no exaggeration to say that every vote cast for the BJP is a vote for Mr Modi.

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2025/12/30/cults-of-personality-pervade-all-levels-of-indian-politics>

**81.** People of dubious character are more likely to enter public service. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

According to new figures, 3.7m young Chinese sat the annual civil-service exam in November, a record. Some may not have had pristine motives for doing so. In a new working paper, John Liu of the University of Hong Kong and others use plagiarism in master’s theses to measure the level of dishonesty. Those who plagiarised more, they find, were more likely to go on to work in the public sector. Once inside they were likely to be promoted more quickly, too.

<https://www.economist.com/china/2025/12/30/people-of-dubious-character-are-more-likely-to-enter-public-service>

**82.**America's most successful mayor stands down. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

When The Economist visited Detroit in late 2025 to interview Mike Duggan, the city's outgoing mayor, the aide scheduling the meeting sent over a piece of redundant information in advance: where to park. Your correspondent found it far more pleasant to amble to and from the Coleman A. Young Municipal Centre on foot.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2025/12/30/americas-most-successful-mayor-stands-down>

**83.**Donald Trump has it in for Brutalism. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

MARCEL BREUER loved concrete. His way with the material made him famous. His design for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), in Washington, DC, landed on the National Register of Historic Places less for its curious layout—which resembles a headless person doing the spread eagle—than its distinction as the first federal building made of precast concrete. Today, its occupants like it rather less. HUD employees call it ten floors of basement. They complain of black mould and toilets that rarely flush. One of the elevator banks hasn't worked in months. "Welcome to Club HUD," sighs a weary officegoer.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2025/12/24/donald-trump-has-it-in-for-brutalism>

**84.** The Supreme Court has taken the National Guard away from Donald Trump. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

THE FRIDAY news dump is a venerable technique to minimise attention to a controversial announcement. On December 23rd the Supreme Court performed the Christmas equivalent, dealing President Donald Trump a rare and consequential defeat at a time when Americans had other things on their minds. In *Trump v Illinois*, an emergency plea that had been pending since October, six justices ruled that the president could not, for now, deploy National Guard troops in Chicago to help federal officials manage protests against his immigration policy.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2025/12/29/the-supreme-court-has-taken-the-national-guard-away-from-donald-trump>

**85.**The economics of megachurches. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

EACH WEEK 45,000 people come to pray in a converted basketball stadium in Houston. On Christmas Eve the unconventional Lakewood Church sanctuary filled with a crowd that looked like a cross-section of America in matching red outfits. When the pastor began telling the story of a baby born in Bethlehem on a starry evening like this one, the massive screens behind him twinkled and smoke machines coated the stage in a cozy fog. A man

sang a gospel rendition of “Silent Night” in Spanish and when the beat dropped every person in the bleachers felt the thump of the bass in their body.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2025/12/26/the-economics-of-megachurches>

**86.** Brazil's general election will be all about Lula—again. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

The two most populous countries in the Americas have important elections in 2026. In October Brazilians will choose a president, all 513 federal deputies, 54 of the country's 81 senators and all 27 state governors. In November voters in the United States will renew Congress and elect 36 governors. The 79-year-old president, Donald Trump, is suffering from the lowest approval ratings of his second term. The latest polls suggest that his opponents will take control of at least one branch of the legislature in 2026 and will be able to start checking Mr Trump's executive power.

<https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2025/12/28/brazils-general-election-will-be-all-about-lula-again>

**87.** Peru's not-so-happy new year. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

Many annual traditions in Peru are laced with superstition. Some folk flaunt yellow underwear, the colour of luck, to ring in the New Year. Others hide lentils in their purses to bring wealth. And many bid a cathartic farewell to the old year by burning effigies of hated public figures—especially politicians. “People want to burn them in real life, but since they can't do that, they burn effigies instead,” says Yacco Vásquez, who for the past 13 years has made and sold muñecos de fin de año. Gathering round a bonfire with loved ones to watch officials frazzle may be one of the gentler aspects of Peruvian politics.

<https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2025/12/30/perus-not-so-happy-new-year>

**88.** Israel recognises Somaliland. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

When the Israeli flag is sighted on the streets of the Muslim world, it is often being set alight or trampled underfoot. Yet in recent days the Star of David has been plastered on buildings and brandished by jubilant crowds in Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland. On December 26th Israel became the first country to recognise the breakaway republic as a sovereign state. “I am the happiest man in the world,” says an adviser to Somaliland's president.

<https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2025/12/30/israel-recognises-somaliland>

**89.** The nautical theory of African development. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

Back in April 2024 a 188-seat passenger ferry arrived at the port of Djibouti, where it was put on a trailer and dragged across a desert. After manoeuvring through dozens of crowded towns, squeezing under overpasses and snapping power lines, it arrived in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital. Having been hauled north across rebel-infested mountains, in August

2025 it reached Lake Tana, where it is supposed to ferry tourists to and from a glitzy resort built by Abiy Ahmed, the prime minister.

<https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2025/12/30/the-nautical-theory-of-african-development>

**90. Bulgarians join the euro and eject their government. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.**

Back in the communist days Bulgarians gained a reputation for meek obedience: unlike the Czechs, Hungarians or Poles they never staged a major uprising. “The sword does not cut the lowered head,” goes a local adage. That makes vast protests of the sort that recently swept the country all the more striking. On December 10th an estimated 100,000 people packed the square in front of the National Assembly in Sofia, the capital, calling for the government to resign. Dozens of demonstrations popped up in smaller towns, showing that the anger went beyond urban elites. For a country of 6.4m people where corruption has left many demoralised, it was an impressive turnout.

[economist.com/europe/2025/12/30/bulgarians-join-the-euro-and-eject-their-government](https://www.economist.com/europe/2025/12/30/bulgarians-join-the-euro-and-eject-their-government)

**91. Why America still needs Europe. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.**

Never since American troops came to Europe’s rescue eight decades ago have the links between the new and old worlds seemed so frayed. MAGA types in Washington ooze contempt for their transatlantic allies. Forget the old barbs about being an open-air museum: Europe is now derided as a migrant-ridden mausoleum hardly worth defending. Indeed, both sides have lost that loving feeling. European pols (with a few populist exceptions) moan that their erstwhile best geopolitical friend has been taken over by an unstable Dummkopf. Because Europe has for decades relied on America for its security, and since an actual war is raging on the continent, the soured relationship is of more immediate concern in Paris, Warsaw and Berlin than in Washington. But America should be mindful, too. President Donald Trump’s predecessors cultivated the alliance because it amplified American influence. Without European “followership”, American power will be less often welcomed or tolerated and more often resisted.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2025/12/30/why-america-still-needs-europe>

**92. How the “take back control” crowd boosted immigration to Britain. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.**

Mass immigration pushed Britain out of the European Union. For a dozen years before the 2016 referendum, many Poles and other east Europeans had settled in the country, exercising their right of free movement within the bloc. Britons had grown anxious about immigration and crotchety about David Cameron’s Conservative government, which had tried and failed to suppress the numbers. Fatally for the Remain cause, net migration reached 321,000 in the year to June 2016. It was the highest figure for at least half a century.

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2025/12/30/how-the-take-back-control-crowd-boosted-immigration-to-britain>

**93.** Nigel Farage is Britain's most European politician. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

For a man who has spent a life trying to break with the rest of Europe, Nigel Farage is quite fond of the place. "I love Europe," begins Mr Farage in one of his frequent billets doux to it. "I love the social, economic, political, cultural diversity that exists within this fantastic continent."

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2025/12/29/nigel-farage-is-britains-most-european-politician>

**94.** A half-planet-size gap in global governance is about to get plugged. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

ON LAND, HUMANS' desire to protect the richness of natural life is as old as Eden; in its modern guise, terrestrial conservation dates back to the founding in 1872 of America's Yellowstone Park. In contrast, the desire to protect the seas' biological diversity is more recent. More often, the ocean has been viewed as a place of plunder or pursuit: a giant global commons, a free-for-all for fishermen and the last frontier for mineral wealth. Besides in Antarctica, no global treaty has managed conservation in the high seas—less than 1% of which are formally protected.

<https://www.economist.com/international/2025/12/30/a-half-planet-size-gap-in-global-governance-is-about-to-get-plugged>

**95.** Pushing workers to the edge. Frontline. Vol.42. No-24. 1-15 Jan 2026.

On November 21, 2025, barely a week after the Bihar election, which saw the National Democratic Alliance coalition return to power in the State, the Central government notified the four Labour Codes that had been passed by Parliament between 2019 and 2020: the Code on Wages, the Industrial Relations (IR) Code, the Code on Social Security, and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSHWC) Code. The codes are being touted as the biggest labour reform in decades, with the claim that 40 crore unorganised sector workers will be legally guaranteed fair wages. It is also claimed that the codes aim at expanded social security, stronger protections for workers, and nationwide portability of entitlements. The codes also promise to boost employment by reducing compliance burdens and enabling flexible and modern work arrangements.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/economy/labour-codes-worker-rights-protections/article70383307.ece>

**96.** Is this the end of worker power?. Frontline. Vol.42. No-24. 1-15 Jan 2026.

Since 1925, the Indian labour movement has gone through many struggles. In pre- and post-Independence India, it had succeeded in forcing the government to frame labour-

friendly laws. But the Narendra Modi government has tried to erase a century's progress of hard-won rights with four new Labour Codes.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/economy/india-new-labour-codes-workers-rights-modi-government/article70398559.ece>

**97.** IndiGo blues. Frontline. Vol.42. No-24. 1-15 Jan 2026.

Aviation continues to be the safest form of travel but also the most exacting—a world where precision is paramount, and where airlines have historically acted as brand ambassadors for their respective nations. When things go well, accolades follow. Indeed, the success of Singapore Airlines is often intertwined with the success of Singapore, the success of Emirates with the success of Dubai, and until recently the success of IndiGo was often cited as a case study for the explosive growth and market potential in India. There was no way to go but towards greater success.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/the-nation/indigo-crisis-india-aviation-policy-passenger-rights/article70406845.ece>

**98.** Why the fuel-switch story does not explain the AI171 crash. Frontline. Vol.42. No-24. 1-15 Jan 2026.

On the day Captain Sumeet Sabharwal earned his wings, his father, Pushkaraj Sabharwal, who was then a senior Aviation Ministry official, happened to see his son's commercial pilot licence file arrive at the office for clearance. A colleague recalls the moment: his posture was straight, his expression composed, almost offhand. The only giveaway was a flicker of pride in his eyes.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/the-nation/ai-171-crash-boeing-787-electrical-failure-core-network/article70407491.ece>

**99.** Centre guilty of denying Himachal its rightful dues: Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu. Frontline. Vol.42. No-24. 1-15 Jan 2026.

As his government completes three years, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu presents a positive outlook for the State despite the immense damage caused in the State by the frequent natural disasters in recent years and the State's wobbly financial condition.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/politics/himachal-sukhu-centre-dues/article70402803.ece>

**100.** Democracy faces a long winter in Ladakh. Frontline. Vol.42. No-24. 1-15 Jan 2026.

In Ladakh, a noticeable silence now surrounds the institutions that once formed the core of local democratic functioning. The Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) in Leh, long regarded as the most immediate platform for ordinary Ladakhis to voice concerns, completed its five-year term on October 30. No election

schedule was announced; no campaigns began; no candidates made their rounds through villages.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/politics/democracy-crisis-ladakh-lahdc-delay/article70376227.ece>

**101. Vande Mataram and its saffron makeover.** Frontline. Vol.42. No-24. 1-15 Jan 2026.

A solemn ceremony to play the National Song in both Houses of Parliament, while MPs, including the Honourable Speaker in the Lok Sabha and the Honourable Chairman in the Rajya Sabha, stood to attention, would have been a dignified way of marking the 150th anniversary of “Vande Mataram”. That was done, but instead of closing the ceremony there, the BJP-led government chose to launch a raucous debate in Parliament on the National Song “in order to set the record right”, as BJP president J.P. Nadda proclaimed in the Rajya Sabha. The saffron lot succeeded only in setting the record wrong.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/columns/vande-mataram-history-bjp-distortion-national-song-india-modi/article70398889.ece>

**102. From Population Control to Reproductive Preparedness.** India Forum. 5th Jan 2026.

For decades, and even today, the success of family planning in India has been measured in numbers: sterilisation figures, contraceptive uptake, fertility rates, and population growth. That lens served a particular policy moment, when India was facing high fertility and rapid population growth, and family planning was seen as a way to ease demographic pressure.

<https://www.theindiaforum.in/health/population-control-reproductive-preparedness>

**103. Peter Navarro, Trump’s Ultimate Yes-Man.** New Yorker. 5th Jan 2026.

In March, 2016, Peter Navarro introduced himself to students in Managing Geopolitical Risk in an Age of a Rising China, a new undergraduate course at the University of California, Irvine. Donald Trump was then a month away from becoming the presumptive Republican nominee for President. Navarro, who had tenure at the business school, was an academic oddity: he worked at a research university, but he’d done little serious research since finishing his doctorate in economics, at Harvard, thirty years earlier. And he didn’t seem to enjoy contact with students. A former friend of his, an economist, recently said, “I don’t think he liked teaching that much—he liked *talking*.” Navarro had secured a life of privilege and frustration. He lived in a big house in Laguna Beach with an ocean view and a pool surrounded by statuary. But he plainly yearned to be somewhere, or someone, else.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/29/peter-navarro-profile>

**104. Communist Centenary: Begin from the Beginning.** Economic & Political Weekly. Vol. 61. No-1. 03 Jan 2026.

The Communist Party of India (CPI) has recently observed the centenary of its foundation. It is not just one party that has completed 100 years of its existence, but the entire communist movement. Of course, the formation of the CPI is not reducible to a single moment, and it was indeed a long-drawn process of uniting multiple factions, groups, and tendencies. In fact, this process continued till the mid-1930s when the party finally took an organised shape, after a prolonged disruptive phase, largely due to repression by the colonial regime. Nonetheless, the 1925 moment retains significance as it forms part of the world historical conjuncture shaped by the October revolution in 1917 and the subsequent (and consequent) formation of communist parties in several colonised and backward countries as the organised expression of struggle against colonial and local sources of oppression. Insofar as these parties emphasised the liberation of the multifariously oppressed segments of the colonised societies from the local oppressors, along with the national liberation from colonisers, they represented a radical vision of freedom rooted in greater democratisation of society and not mere transfer of power.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2026/1/editorials/communist-centenary-beginning.html>

**105.** Not Cop Outs but a Just Transition. *Economic & Political Weekly*. Vol. 61. No-1. 03 Jan 2026.

A decade after the Paris Agreement, clearly much was left to be desired from the 2025 Conference of the Parties (COP30) in Belém, Brazil. Symbolically and politically, the weight of COP30 was massive. The host country, a biodiversity hotspot facing rapid and almost irreversible environmental degradation, is indeed an upgrade from the previous polluting fossil-fuel-powered hosts. However, the “COP of truth” or “COP of implementation” has been just a cop-out attempt by entitled polluters. Ironically, agribusinesses, and not farmers, and fossil fuel companies, and not the workers or the indigenous people, dominated the halls of the COP summit.

<https://www.epw.in/index.php/journal/2026/1/comment/not-cop-outs-just-transition.html>

**106.** The Suspect Muslim and the Grammar of Epistemic Violence. *Economic & Political Weekly*. Vol. 61. No-1. 03 Jan 2026.

In postcolonial India, one enduring theme has been the persistent portrayal of Muslims as the usual suspects and perpetually disloyal (Pandey 1999). As Irfan Ahmad (2023) reminds us, the systematic delegitimisation of Muslim ways of being is not a recent phenomenon but one rooted in the very project of Indian nation state formation, sustained through Orientalist portrayals of Muslims as inherently “foreign” and “violent.” The perception has, in fact, been institutionalised through cultural politics, constitutional frameworks, and routine practices of governance—mechanisms that often appear innocuous but ultimately reinforce exclusion (Singh 2005).

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2026/1/commentary/suspect-muslim-and-grammar-epistemic-violence.html>

**107. Socialist Mayor in the Capital of Global Capitalism.** Economic & Political Weekly. Vol. 61. No-1. 03 Jan 2026.

The dramatic, unexpected success of Zohran Mamdani in decisively winning the New York City mayoral elections has been frequently described in the United States (US) and global mass media as a “political earthquake.” Despite the fact that opinion polls leading up to the elections consistently showed that Mamdani was leading, commentators were generally expecting a last-minute reversal of fortune for Andrew Cuomo, given the financial support of billionaires to Cuomo, coupled with Islamophobic negative advertisements against Mamdani. However, with the proverbial hindsight, given the structural and ideological transformations in the US over the past few decades, the victory of Mamdani, providing as it does a ray of hope in decidedly bleak times, was not too surprising.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2026/1/commentary/socialist-mayor-capital-global-capitalism.html>

## SCIENCE

**108. The future of space exploration depends on better biology.** Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

The typical number of people in space at any given time is currently ten: seven on the International Space Station shared by the space agencies of America, Canada, Europe, Japan and Russia, and three on China’s Tiangong. Jeff Bezos, a celebrity bridegroom and former bookseller, believes that in the coming decades this number will increase by five orders of magnitude to a million or so. Elon Musk, a carmaker and social-media provocateur, suggests similar numbers could soon be settling on Mars. Even if you think such predictions are outlandish, the two tycoons are clearly right about one thing. The number is set to rise.

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2025/12/30/the-future-of-space-explorationdepends-on-better-biology>

**109. How to export life to Mars.** Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

LIGHTHAVEN, ONE kilometre down Telegraph Avenue from the campus of the University of California, Berkeley, is a rambling conference facility which dedicates itself to “hosting events and programmes that help people think better and to improve humanity’s long-term trajectory”. A few months ago, scientists gathered to talk about Mars. Specifically, how to create viable ecosystems on the red planet.

<https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2025/12/30/how-to-export-life-to-mars>

**110. The spiders on the icecaps of Mars.** Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

While the northern hemisphere of Earth makes its way through winter, the southern hemisphere of Mars is reaching the end of spring, and as a result it is blooming, with patches of darkness blossoming under the watchful eyes of orbiting satellites. Discovered in the early 2000s, they are of astrobiological interest because they indicate local conditions that could be more habitable than Mars's surface is at other times.

<https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2025/12/30/the-spiders-on-the-icecaps-of-mars>

**111.** What is the best way to train for a marathon?. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

For many would-be marathoners, January seems as good a time as any to dust off their trainers and begin the journey to running 26.2 miles (42km). To hit a goal time or even just complete the race without injury, runners need to follow a training plan.

<https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2025/12/26/what-is-the-best-way-to-train-for-a-marathon>

**112.** The internet's vulnerable undersea tendrils. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

In January 2022 the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano erupted with the force of a nuclear bomb, sending a plume of ash nearly 60km into the sky. For the island nation of Tonga, 65km away, an eerie silence followed. The sole undersea cable connecting it to the rest of the world had been snapped by an underwater avalanche from the volcano. Tongans could not text loved ones to say they were unharmed. Banks shut down; hospitals could not transfer patient records; pilots had to fly blind. The subscription for a satellite-backup system had lapsed and, with no internet access, it could not be renewed.

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2025/12/30/the-internets-vulnerable-undersea-tendrils>

## SOCIOLOGY

**113.** What self-help books tell us about ourselves. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

To understand modern self-help books, open “Always Remember: The Boy, the Mole, the Fox, the Horse and the Storm”. The sequel to “The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse”—and no doubt the prequel to the “The Boy, the Mole, the Fox, the Horse and the Massive Royalty Cheque”—these animal parables topped Britain’s bestseller charts at Christmas. They have sold many millions of copies (often a bad sign) and been described as “heartwarming” (a worse one).

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2025/12/30/what-self-help-books-tell-us-about-ourselves>

**114.** Oleg Lyalin: the spy who loved too much. Economist. 3rd Jan 2026.

For Oleg Lyalin it was a dream posting. After a dull stint in Klaipeda, on the Baltic coast, he was on his way to “swinging London” in 1969. Ostensibly he was joining a Soviet trade mission; in fact Lyalin, a hard-drinking philanderer, worked for Department V, a kgb outfit that specialised in sabotage and assassinations. Two years later, he became one of the cold war’s most important defectors, handing Britain’s security service, MI5, a trove of intelligence that restored its reputation and led to the expulsion of 105 Soviet spies.

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2025/12/30/oleg-lyalin-the-spy-who-loved-too-much>

**115.** Why Millennials Love Prenups. *New Yorker*. 5th Jan 2026.

Andrea Zevallos declared 2016 her “year of dating.” She was twenty-seven, working at Universal Studios Hollywood, the theme park, and determined to find love. She calculated it would take three dates a week. By December, she was losing hope. “It was exhausting,” she said. Then, while scrolling OkCupid, she noticed a “cute guy” with a “Hamilton” reference in his handle. His name was Alex Switzky, and like her he was a musical-theatre enthusiast and aspiring screenwriter. He was different from the other men she’d met. On their second date, he started planning a third. Zevallos “was used to L.A. guys cagey about any sort of calendar.” One day, Switzky called her. Accustomed to texts, she assumed that he was about to break up with her. “The most millennial response,” she recalled, laughing. At the time, Switzky was a tow-truck dispatcher. “I *like* the phone,” he said.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/29/why-millennials-love-prenups>

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

S.No.	Title	Periodicity	Place of Publication
1	Chronicle of Higher Education	BW	US
2	Economist (A.M.)	W	London
3	Economic & Political Weekly	W	Mumbai
4	Frontline	W	India
5	History Today	M	London
6	India Forum	W	India
7	New Yorker	W	New York
8	University News	W	New Delhi