

ARTICLE ALERT 16-31 JANUARY 2026

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AGRICULTURE

1. Ageing farmers threaten South-East Asia's growth. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

This month Malaysia launched new grants for young entrepreneurs. But the startup programme it has revamped is not for typical techies: it is only for people who like getting mud on their boots. Its goal is to herd more youngsters into agriculture—and Malaysia is not alone. Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand have similar agricultural schemes.

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2026/01/22/ageing-farmers-threaten-south-east-asias-growth>

ART

2. Popular music is getting sadder and angstier. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

“DIE WITH a smile” by Lady Gaga and Bruno Mars was the anthem of 2025. The soppy ballad climbed charts in more than 30 countries and became the longest-running daily number-one song on Spotify, a streaming platform. Its appeal owes something to its mood: pop music has grown gloomier. Sad sells.

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2026/01/22/popular-music-is-getting-sadder-and-angstier>

3. The credits are rolling on Sundance Film Festival in Park City. Economist. 24th Jan 2026. IN THE DAYS leading up to the Sundance Film Festival, Park City, Utah, is quiet with anticipation. Festival banners adorn lamp-posts and lights zigzag across Main Street. In the 41 years since it began, the festival has transformed Park City and offered a vital showcase to independent film-makers. However, in typical Hollywood fashion, everyone is already awaiting the sequel. On January 22nd Sundance kicked off its final festival in Utah before moving to Boulder, Colorado, in 2027.

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2026/01/21/the-credits-are-rolling-on-sundance-film-festival-in-park-city>

4. Louise Bourgeois's Art Can Still Enthrall. New Yorker. 2nd Feb 2026.

It's a credit to Louise Bourgeois that her art can still surprise. For much of her career, the French-born, New York-based artist showed only sporadically—until the Museum of Modern Art gave her a retrospective, in 1982, when she was seventy. After that, and especially since her death, in 2010, Bourgeois has become a household name, and her art a familiar presence. Yet even acolytes of her psychologically freighted sculptures,

drawings, and prints may find new revelation in “Gathering Wool,” an exhibition at Hauser & Wirth (through April 18) focussed on her late abstractions.

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/goings-on/louise-bourgeoiss-art-can-still-enthrall>

5. Tyler Mitchell’s Art-Historical Mood Board. New Yorker. 2nd Feb 2026.

Tyler Mitchell, the thirty-year-old photography phenom, has enjoyed a rocket-fuelled rise in the fashion and art worlds since graduating from New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts less than a decade ago. In 2018, he became the first Black photographer to shoot a cover for *Vogue*, capturing Beyoncé in a frilly white prairie dress with an elaborate headpiece that simultaneously recalled Giuseppe Arcimboldo’s fantastical paintings, Frida Kahlo’s elaborate flower crowns, and Carmen Miranda’s fruit-basket hats. He has since done campaigns for fashion houses including Ralph Lauren, Louis Vuitton, Ferragamo, Balenciaga, Loewe, and Wales Bonner, and photographed for the catalogue of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s recent exhibition “Superfine: Tailoring Black Style.” He has had two solo exhibitions at the Gagosian gallery, which now represents him, and has been the subject of a handful of museum shows in the United States and Europe, including “Wish This Was Real,” currently on view at the Maison Européenne de la Photographie, in Paris. A hefty, handsome book of the same name, released recently by Aperture, features a diverse, almost absurdly heavy-hitting list of contributors including Anna Wintour, Rashid Johnson, and Drew Sawyer, the co-curator of the upcoming Whitney Biennial. “How lucky we all are,” Wintour writes in her essay, “to witness such a wizard at work.”

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/photo-booth/tyler-mitchells-art-historical-mood-board>

6. “Ragtime” Cases the Landmark It Almost Blew Up. New Yorker. 2nd Feb 2026.

“Ragtime,” at Lincoln Center Theatre, is a show that asks, among other things, whether it makes sense to rig J. P. Morgan’s library with explosives and blow it up. But, at the Morgan Library & Museum the other day, there were no hard feelings. “We saw ‘Ragtime.’ We loved ‘Ragtime,’” Colin Bailey, the museum’s director, told a group of guests, as he welcomed them into a wood-panelled parlor. The visitors were the show’s director, Lear deBessonet, who is also Lincoln Center Theatre’s new artistic director, and the actors Joshua Henry (Coalhouse Walker, Jr.), Ben Levi Ross (Younger Brother), and John Clay III (Booker T. Washington). All three play key roles in the library scene—in which Walker’s revolutionaries, seeking justice for a racial atrocity, hold Morgan’s collection hostage—but none had visited the real thing, on Thirty-sixth Street.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2026/02/02/ragtime-cases-the-landmark-it-almost-blew-up>

7. Run-DMC’s School of Thought. New Yorker. 2nd Feb 2026.

On a recent winter day, in Hollis, Queens, Darryl McDaniels, otherwise known as DMC, of the hip-hop group Run-DMC, visited P.S. 360Q, at the site of the school he attended as a kid, in the nineteen-seventies. “It’s crazy being here, because it feels still like yesterday,” he said, as he strolled past a hand-drawn sign that read “kindness matters.” McDaniels,

who wore white Adidas and a T-shirt reading “AC/DC—Back in Black,” was headed toward the music room to meet some second graders. “Um, can I use that rest room?” he asked, pointing at a door marked “BOYS.”

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2026/02/02/run-dmcs-school-of-thought>

8. Morton Feldman’s Music of Stillness. New Yorker. 2nd Feb 2026.

I really don’t feel that it’s all necessary anymore,” Morton Feldman told an interviewer in 1972. “And so what I try to bring into my music are just a very few essential things that I need—to at least keep it going, for a little while more.” Feldman had been asked whether his corpus of work, with its brooding slowness and trembling softness, had something to do with Jewish mourning in the wake of the Holocaust. He evaded the question, though he admitted that he thought about it privately. Instead, he gestured toward a more abstract vanishing—what he called “the death of art,” or, more acutely, “Schubert leaving me.”

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2026/02/02/morton-feldman-at-100-music-review>

BIOGRAPHY

9. Madhav Gadgil (1942-2026): The People’s Ecologist. India Forum. 13th Jan 2026.

I come from a family of scientists, but I shied away from studying science myself. Yet, in a happy irony, it turned out that the most important intellectual collaboration of my life was with a scientist, Madhav Gadgil, whose eightieth birthday falls later this month. Born in Puné, Gadgil studied in Bombay, and at Harvard, where he took a Ph D in ecology and later also taught. In the early 1970s, he and his wife Sulochana (who had a Ph D in mathematics from Harvard) decided to forsake the prestige and comfort of a scientific career in the United States and instead devote themselves to working in India. Fortunately, their brilliance (and passion) was recognized by the visionary Director of the Indian Institute of Science, Satish Dhawan, who offered them both positions at the Institute’s Bangalore campus. There, Sulochana helped set up a Centre for Atmospheric Sciences while herself doing landmark work on the monsoon. Madhav founded a Centre for Ecological Sciences, mentoring some fine young scientists along the way.

<https://www.theindiaforum.in/environment/madhav-gadgil-1942-2026-peoples-ecologist>

10. Cecilia Giménez only meant to be helpful. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

As the griffon vulture flies, there is no great distance between the arid plains of La Mancha and the semi-arid slopes of Aragon, in northern Spain. There was no great distance either between the life-tracks of the hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha and Cecilia Giménez, widow of the town of Borja, for all their superficial difference. Both kept up appearances as best they could, on modest incomes. And both were dreamers—he immersed in books

of chivalry and she, beyond housework, in flower painting—who decided on their own initiative to sally out and right wrongs. He, though withered and almost 50, went forth with his rusty lance to win the love of the beauteous but unseen Dulcinea del Toboso. She, though 81 and getting stiff in the legs, went out with her brushes to please the Virgin of Mercy, the patron of her parish church, who had pointed out a job that needed doing.

<https://www.economist.com/obituary/2026/01/22/cecilia-gimenez-only-meant-to-be-helpful>

11. Who's afraid of Tucker Carlson?. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

He flopped on CNN and MSNBC. A hit on Fox, he was sacked again in 2023, only to rise up as powerful as before, interviewing world leaders on his own-brand network. Tucker Carlson's career—like Donald Trump's, with which it is entwined—has bounced between disaster and triumph. In his bilious radicalisation and plunge into new media, his personal saga is also the recent “story of the United States”.

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2026/01/22/whos-afraid-of-tucker-carlson>

12. Valentino was a fashion designer who rose above fashion trends. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

IT ALL STARTED, Valentino Garavani remembered, with “Ziegfeld Girl” (1941). He went to see the film when he was young. The beauty of its stars, including Lana Turner and Judy Garland, had been enhanced by their costumes: fringed gowns, feathers and billowing overskirts.

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2026/01/20/valentino-was-a-fashion-designer-who-rose-above-fashion-trends>

13. Nancy Kerrigan Persisted. New Yorker. 2nd Feb 2026.

Nancy Kerrigan doesn't plan to attend the Winter Olympics in Italy next month. But she's excited to watch the U.S. figure-skating contenders on TV. “It's pretty expensive to go,” she said recently, in a coffee shop in Bellport, on Long Island. “I probably wouldn't even be able to get a ticket.” Nonetheless, her presence will be felt: the white sheer-sleeved skating dress, designed by Vera Wang that she wore when she won the bronze medal, in 1992 — two years before the leg-bashing linked to her rival Tonya Harding— will be on display.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2026/02/02/nancy-kerrigan-persisted>

14. Emily Nussbaum on Jane Kramer's “Founding Cadre”. New Yorker. 2nd Feb 2026.

In late 1969, Jane Kramer was back in Manhattan after a spell in Morocco with her husband, an anthropologist. In her absence, the sparks of second-wave feminism had ignited, in two forms: there were the liberals of NOW and also the radicals, whose colorful speak-outs were catnip to journalists. That fall, the *Village Voice* assigned the writer Vivian Gornick to skewer the “libbers,” but instead she wrote a rousing manifesto that ended with the mention of a new group—and a number to call if you wanted to join.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/takes/emily-nussbaum-on-jane-kramers-founding-cadre>

BUSINESS

- 15.** Too much cash, not enough sense. Frontline. Vol.43. No-1. 16-31 Jan 2026.

The year 2025 was a remarkable year for money. And by remarkable I mean absolutely, 100 per cent ludicrous. But such are the vagaries of money. Just when you think you have seen everything there is to see about this most ancient of human obsessions, along will come an incident that will make you reflect, ruminate, and regurgitate your morning coffee.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/society/money-absurdities-satire-capitalism-hype-mockery-wealth-excess/article70473379.ece>

- 16.** Why the beauty industry is booming. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

CONSUMERS across much of the world have been feeling glum lately. In 20 countries tracked by Ipsos, a pollster, sentiment remains stuck below where it was at the start of 2022, before prices rocketed for all manner of goods, followed by interest rates. Donald Trump's willingness to tear up global trade and threaten enemies and allies alike with military force has hardly lifted shoppers' spirits.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2026/01/20/why-the-beauty-industry-is-booming>

- 17.** Chinese AI models are popular. But can they make money?. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

In the year since DeepSeek, a little-known artificial-intelligence lab from China, shocked the world with a whizzy new model, the country's clout in AI has only grown. It is now the undisputed global leader in so-called open-weight models, which make freely available the numerical parameters learned during training (though not the underlying data or source code). On Hugging Face, a popular library for such open models, downloads of Chinese ones have now overtaken those from America (see chart 1).

<https://www.economist.com/business/2026/01/22/chinese-ai-models-are-popular-but-can-they-make-money>

- 18.** Europe can still win the other AI race. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

Across the world, most businesses are still merely dipping their toes in artificial intelligence. Not so Schneider Electric, claims Peter Weckesser, who oversees the digital efforts of the French maker of industrial equipment. It has around 100 applications of the technology already in operation. Morgan Stanley, an investment bank, reckons that these will result in around €400m (\$470m) in annual savings for the company this year. That amounts to less than 1.5% of its total costs. But Mr Weckesser has his sights set much

higher. Eventually, he declares, “there will be not a single product or function at Schneider Electric that will not be affected by artificial intelligence.”

<https://www.economist.com/business/2026/01/22/europe-can-still-win-the-other-ai-race>

- 19.** Strava’s public listing will help it race ahead of competitors. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.
Now is the time of year when many of those who resolved on December 31st to change their sedentary ways will begin to lower those ambitions. But for Strava, a popular exercise app, 2026 is off to a running start. This month reports emerged that the company had filed confidentially for a public listing and hired investment bankers to guide it through the process.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2026/01/22/stravas-public-listing-will-help-it-race-ahead-of-competitors>

- 20.** The battle for Warner Bros is only getting fiercer. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.
Since last autumn Netflix and Paramount have been chasing Warner Bros Discovery like a pair of Wile E. Coyotes in pursuit of a Road Runner. Paramount, recently acquired by the Ellison family, was initially the favourite to capture the prize. But last month Netflix dropped a giant cartoon anvil on the Ellisons when it announced that it had signed a deal with Warner’s management to acquire most of the company.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2026/01/22/the-battle-for-warner-bros-is-only-getting-fiercer>

- 21.** TikTok is still a danger. America no longer cares. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.
TikTok has sucked up countless hours of teenagers’ lives. But it has kept plenty of politicians awake past their bedtime, too. Ever since the short-video app launched nearly a decade ago, Western governments have suspected it of being a tool of the Chinese Communist Party. In 2020, during his first presidential term, Donald Trump declared a national emergency as he tried unsuccessfully to outlaw TikTok, claiming that it was stealing users’ data and feeding them propaganda. Four years later, under Joe Biden, a big bipartisan majority of Congress passed a bill compelling the app to separate from its Chinese owner or else be banned. After the Supreme Court upheld that law last year, TikTok’s days in its largest market looked numbered.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2026/01/21/tiktok-is-still-a-danger-america-no-longer-cares>

ECONOMICS

- 22.** Rolling Back MGNREGA Will Have Serious Consequences. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.61. No-3. 17th Jan 2026.

The replacement of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) of 2005 by the Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB–G RAM G) Act of 2025 is a major misstep that will adversely impact poverty-alleviation efforts. It will not only negatively affect the already meagre earnings of the rural workforce but also further disempower disadvantaged social groups, especially Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and women, who constitute more than half of the beneficiaries of the scheme.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2026/3/editorials/rolling-back-mgnrega-will-have-serious.html>

- 23.** Argentina and the Donroe Doctrine. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.61. No-3. 17th Jan 2026.

Under the shadow of an evolving geopolitical context, a new Monroe Doctrine has taken shape—or the Donroe Doctrine, as it was aptly called by the *New York Post*—epitomised by direct military action against Venezuela and the forcible removal of its president. In this context, Argentina's dependence on external financial and political support further complicates the prospects for autonomous economic policy, as geopolitical enforcement increasingly operates alongside financial conditionality to delimit the boundaries of permissible policy choices. The policy framework being advanced by the United States (US) administration—and by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which remains effectively dependent on the US—has been instrumental in propping up the Javier Milei administration, yet is far more likely to undermine the prospects for stability and recovery than to promote them.¹

<https://www.epw.in/journal/h-t-parekh-finance-column/argentina-and-donroe-doctrine.html>

- 24.** Is Tertiarisation the Way Forward?. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.61. No-3. 17th Jan 2026.

The growth trajectory and the associated employment patterns in West Bengal are analysed between 2012 and 2023 to see if the current growth trajectory in its subsectors generated employment, and to examine the nature of the employment generated. The manufacturing sector registered high growth compared to agriculture and the tertiary sector, but failed to generate adequate employment. Within the tertiary sector, salaried employment is generated within the wholesale and retail trade subsector. However, these jobs are primarily informal, low paid, and without job security, with earnings below the national average.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2026/3/commentary/tertiarisation-way-forward.html>

- 25.** The Race in Per Capita Net Domestic Product across Indian States. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.61. No-3. 17th Jan 2026.

The relative ranking of Indian states in terms of per capita net state domestic product from 1980–81 to 2023–24 is examined in this paper. Goa in the western region emerges as the front runner for most of the period, while Sikkim in the North East records the fastest

improvement, rising to the second position. With Karnataka and Tamil Nadu leading their respective cohorts, the southern states have, on the whole, outperformed the rest of the country. In contrast, states in the eastern and northern regions occupy the lower end of the distribution, with Bihar and Uttar Pradesh—together home to nearly a quarter of India's population remaining at the bottom. Of particular concern is the deterioration in the relative ranks of Punjab in the north and West Bengal in the east, both of which were among the more prosperous states in the past. Given their large populations, migration from poorer to the richer states can, at best, mitigate these disparities but cannot resolve them. Sustained growth must therefore be generated within the lagging states themselves.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2026/3/special-articles/race-capita-net-domestic-product-across-indian.html>

- 26.** Which Inflation Should India Target?. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.61. No-3. 17th Jan 2026.

Persistent divergence between survey-based consumption estimates and national accounts data has resulted in serious mismeasurement of consumer price index inflation. The current CPI-Combined, which relies on survey-based expenditure weights, covers only about 45% of total private consumption expenditure and is therefore not fully representative. Replacing survey-based weights with private final consumption expenditure weights, as available from the national accounts, would yield a more representative inflation measure and offer several advantages. These include consistency in food and services weights across growth and inflation measurement, closer alignment with practices in other G20 countries, easier adoption of a chain-based index methodology, a closer tracking of headline inflation with core inflation, lower volatility and persistence in headline inflation, and improved suitability for inflation targeting by the Reserve Bank of India.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2026/3/special-articles/which-inflation-should-india-target.html>

- 27.** What India Needs to Prioritize to Realize its 2047 “Viksit” Aspiration. India Forum. 16th Jan 2026.

To understand if the aspiration of “Viksit Bharat” or Developed India is more than nice sounding rhetoric, we need to unpack what “developed” actually means and understand and agree on the purposes of development. People are the real wealth of nations and the three main essential purposes of development, regardless of which stage of development a person or country is at are to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy, creative lives, to acquire knowledge and to have access to the resources needed for a decent and dignified standard of living.

<https://www.theindiaforum.in/public-policy/what-india-needs-prioritize-realize-its-2047-viksit-aspiration>

- 28.** The biggest drag on global trade isn't tariffs, but standards. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

NOTHING HAS done more to juice global trade than a simple receptacle—spanning about 40 feet on the long side and eight on the other two. It could be stuffed with cargo and hoisted onto lorries, trains, ships or planes with equal ease. That humble steel box—the standard shipping container—did “more than all trade agreements in the past 50 years put together” to boost globalisation, this newspaper has noted.

<https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2026/01/22/the-biggest-drag-on-global-trade-isnt-tariffs-but-standards>

29. Donald Trump’s grab for Greenland makes no sense. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

NUUK, THE capital of Greenland, is on edge. “I am scared of an invasion,” whispers Anthony, who works in a hardware shop nestled near the city’s harbour. “I don’t want Greenland to become a war zone.” The shopkeeper at a nearby hunting store says locals are stocking up on ammunition. “People are frightened,” says Casper Frank Møller, the owner of a tour company. “People here are talking to their families about moving to Denmark.”

<https://www.economist.com/briefing/2026/01/21/donald-trumps-grab-for-greenland-makes-no-sense>

30. Which Chinese provinces splash their cash?. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

AT LAST CHINA’s government wants to ramp up domestic consumption. So far, there’s not much to show for it. Figures released on January 19th showed that GDP grew by 5% in 2025, driven by buoyant exports. At about 4.2%, household consumption growth lagged GDP. “Who is actually still spending money?” asks a headline on a Chinese news site. The article shows a chart that has gone viral: Chinese provinces categorised into those that “dare” to consume, and those that are “happy”, “cautious” or “afraid” to do so, it suggests.

<https://www.economist.com/china/2026/01/22/which-chinese-provinces-splash-their-cash>

31. What’s a good man worth in China’s marriage market?. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

EARLIER THIS month, when Yun Chichi posted on Xiaohongshu, a social-media app, about an eligible bachelor looking to marry, she listed his many good qualities. The man had a car and a steady job in a hospital. His parents were taken care of with good retirement funds. He didn’t smoke or drink, could cook and was mild-mannered. He was a total catch. Theoretically, if she wanted this man to marry into her family (an unusual arrangement), how much should she pay for him on the marriage market in China, she asked?

<https://www.economist.com/china/2026/01/22/whats-a-good-man-worth-in-chinas-marriage-market>

32. The meaning of “America First” is in flux. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

Once people thought Donald Trump was at heart an isolationist or a “restrainer”, a kind of isolationist-lite. Air strikes in the Middle East during his first term could be chalked up to the neoconservatives around him. Then the president returned to office and attacked

Venezuela, Nigeria, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Somalia and Yemen. He made a quixotic bid for Greenland, though appeared to ease up on that at the World Economic Forum in Davos this week. International-relations theorists now liken him to a 19th-century realist prowling for natural resources. Others see a man who relishes domination and the exercise of power for power's sake.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2026/01/19/the-meaning-of-america-first-is-in-flux>

33. An audacious new book about a “precocious” country. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

When he was the Indian government's chief economist from 2014 to 2018, Arvind Subramanian made a surprising discovery. He drew an unexpectedly large audience for his annual “Economic Survey”, written on the eve of each year's budget. As well as dry updates on tax revenues, inflation and grain production, his surveys included striking charts, provocative arguments and rhetorical flourishes. In 2016 he published a chart, bold in its simplicity, showing that democracy and development tended to go hand in hand. The big exceptions were China (too rich, given its lack of democracy) and India (not rich enough, given its “vibrant political institutions”). The chart indicated two ways in which India might converge to the global mean: fast growth or institutional decline.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2026/01/22/an-audacious-new-book-about-a-precocious-country>

34. Can America's bond market keep defying the vigilantes?. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

A year into Donald Trump's second term, investors have no shortage of reasons to flee American assets. They must contend with blockbuster deficits, attacks on the Federal Reserve, trade wars—and most recently an obsession with annexing Greenland that at one point looked as if it might blow up NATO. Occasionally, confidence has wavered. It has lately done so again, as the Greenland furore collided with a blow-up in Japanese government bonds, knocking up yields on Treasuries.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2026/01/22/can-americas-bond-market-keep-defying-the-vigilantes>

35. Japan's bond-market tremble reflects a fiscal-monetary clash. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

Something is amiss with Japanese government bonds (JGBs). On January 20th the country's longest-dated debt sold off sharply. The yield on 30-year bonds rose by a quarter of a percentage point, the most in a day since 1999. The 40-year yield pierced 4% for the first time. Though yields fell the next day, the trembling bond market will overshadow a meeting of the Bank of Japan (BoJ) on January 22nd and 23rd. As it should: investors have cottoned on to a clash between the central bank and Takaichi Sanae's government.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2026/01/21/japans-bond-market-tremble-reflects-a-fiscal-monetary-clash>

36. American decay versus American dynamism. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

APENSION FUND for Danish university staff cannot expect to make international headlines very often. But on January 20th AkademikerPension did just that, by announcing the sale of its holdings of American government bonds. The fund's managers stressed that the decision was not a reaction to America's territorial threats to Greenland, a Danish territory, but a judgment on Washington's rampant overspending.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2026/01/21/american-decay-versus-american-dynamism>

37. China hits its GDP target—in a weird way. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

IN A CHAOTIC world, China did the predictable thing. Its economy met the official growth target for 2025, according to figures released on January 19th, just as it had the year before and the year before that. GDP grew by 5%, although China's population fell even faster than forecast. Growth was boosted by a record trade surplus, which reached almost \$1.2trn, despite the country's tariff war with America (see chart 1).

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2026/01/19/china-hits-its-gdp-target-in-a-weird-way>

38. National job stereotypes need updating. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

THE RICH world's labour market is on a roll. In the past three years the average unemployment rate in the OECD, a club of mostly wealthy countries, has repeatedly hit historical lows. The employment rate of working-age people is at an all-time high (see chart 1). Not bad in a world of tariffs, geopolitical uncertainty and the threat to jobs from artificial intelligence. Behind the strong aggregate performance lies even more remarkable change. Long-standing stereotypes are melting away.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2026/01/22/national-job-stereotypes-need-updating>

39. India's Economic Survey 2025-26 Advocates Swadeshi Strategy for Strategic Resilience. Open Magazine. 31st Jan 2026.

INDIA'S ECONOMIC performance in recent years is the stuff of envy. High economic growth coupled with macroeconomic stability is a combination that all countries strive for but few are able to secure on a long-term basis. In a world beset with strategic rivalries, mercantilist tendencies and outright hostility, India remains open to trade and investment. What could possibly go wrong?

<https://openthemagazine.com/india/indias-economic-survey-2025-26-advocates-swadeshi-strategy-for-strategic-resilience>

40. India-EU Deal: The Ultimate Bargain. Open Magazine. 31st Jan 2026.

SOON AFTER INDIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU) agreed on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen said she wanted to speak about an event that held deep meaning. In her remarks on Tuesday,

January 27, she said, “Two weeks ago India marked *Makar Sankranti*, it is the beginning of *uttarayan*, the sun’s northward journey, from darkness to light, from stillness to growth, from what was to what can be, and that is what makes our summit so unique.”

<https://openthemagazine.com/india/india-eu-deal-the-ultimate-bargain>

41. FASTag Slow Tracks Speed Money. Open Magazine. 31st Jan 2026.

Soon, even that small window to make money “under the table” will close. From April 1, all 1,228 toll plazas in the country will go completely cashless, accepting only FASTag and UPI. Just look at toll collection numbers over the last three years, after nearly 98% of vehicles began using FASTag. Collections rose from Rs 54,068 crore in FY22–23 to Rs 61,000 crore in FY23–24, and further to Rs 72,500 crore in FY24–25. They are expected to touch the Rs 1 lakh crore mark by FY26–27.

<https://openthemagazine.com/india/fastag-slow-tracks-speed-money>

EDUCATION

42. Why Is School Dropout Still a Challenge in West Bengal?. India Forum. 15th Jan 2026.

India has made significant improvements in school enrolment over the years. While at the national level, the dropout rate has significantly reduced over the years, there is considerable variation among states. Amidst this diversity, West Bengal presents a worrying picture. At the preparatory and middle levels, the state’s dropout rates are almost identical to the national average, data from the Unified District Information System for Education (U-DISE) show. However, at the secondary level, the rate is more than twice the national average for both boys and girls: once in classes between 9 and 12, a fifth of West Bengal’s children drop out of school.

<https://www.theindiaforum.in/education/why-school-dropout-still-challenge-west-bengal>

43. Universities Need a New Defense. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol 72. No-10. 16th Jan 2026.

The American university remains the standard for the world. Some of the most talented individuals from around the globe spend their lives as professors on American campuses working to discover new knowledge and introduce the next generation to accomplishments of the human mind.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/universities-need-a-new-defense>

44. Randall Kennedy Is Afraid. He Thinks You Should Be Too. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol 72. No-10. 16th Jan 2026.

Randall Kennedy doesn't shy away from an argument. His classes at Harvard Law School, where he has taught for more than four decades, are intellectually raucous affairs. As a law student, future President Barack Obama enrolled in one of Kennedy's courses but, according to David Remnick's biography, later dropped the course, fearing a "semester-long shout fest."

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/randall-kennedy-is-afraid-he-thinks-you-should-be-too>

- 45.** The Billion-Dollar Ripple Effect. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol 72. No-10. 16th Jan 2026.

James M. Dewar is worried about his frog guy.

Dewar, an assistant professor of biochemistry at Vanderbilt University, researches the genetic causes of cancer and aging with the goal of developing better cancer treatments. And that requires frog eggs. Lots of them.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-billion-dollar-ripple-effect>

- 46.** The Campus Civility Collapse. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol 72. No-10. 16th Jan 2026.

The past two years have exposed a fundamental tension in higher education. Most universities are committed to both diversity and free speech, yet many are unable to cope with the social consequences of passionate disagreement. As protests over Israel and Gaza spread across campuses, administrators called for a return to civility, as though civility were a switch that could be flipped back on. But the confusion, anger, and institutional paralysis that followed suggest that universities aren't just struggling to maintain civility on campus; they have no consensus about what civility requires.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-campus-civility-collapse>

- 47.** A Professor Said a Threatening Post About Zionists Was Satire. Her University Concluded It Was 'Disruption.' Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol 72. No-10. 16th Jan 2026.

When Jemma DeCristo suggested on X, three days after the October 7 Hamas attack in Israel, that "zionist journalists" and their kids should fear for their lives, the University of California at Davis was besieged with hundreds of letters, including demands that she be fired, complaints from students and staff who said they felt scared and angry, and threats from donors to withhold future gifts.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/a-professor-said-a-threatening-post-about-zionists-was-satire-her-university-concluded-it-was-disruption>

- 48.** Is Your Course Content 'Relevant' and 'Necessary'? Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol 72. No-10. 16th Jan 2026.

Every fall, Linda Kornasky uses Walt Whitman's poem, "A Song of Myself," in her "American Romantic Literature" class to explore themes of nature, human connection, and LGBTQ identity.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/is-your-course-content-relevant-and-necessary>

- 49.**In Northwestern's Trump Agreement, International Students Singled Out For 'Open Debate' Training. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol 72. No-10. 16th Jan 2026.

For her freshmen year at Northwestern University, Dasha Dubinina arrived two days early from Belarus to learn alongside other international students how to set up a bank account, file taxes, and maintain their visa status.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/in-northwesterns-trump-agreement-international-students-singled-out-for-open-debate-training>

- 50.**Scholarly Associations Are Becoming Identity Battlegrounds. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol 72. No-10. 16th Jan 2026.

In a recent piece for The Times of Israel, Adam Ferziger, a Bar-Ilan University professor, recounts what he views as something of a Hanukkah miracle. The incident occurred at the annual meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies in Washington, D.C. As Ferziger tells the story, a candle-lighting ritual had been programmed for 5 p.m. on the first night of Hanukkah. The ceremony was expected to be a low-key affair situated in a small breakout space. But Providence, apparently, had other ideas.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/scholarly-associations-are-becoming-identity-battlegrounds>

- 51.** The Noxiousness of Civic-Discourse Platforms. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol 72. No-10. 16th Jan 2026.

While for much of the country's early history, many U.S. colleges and universities required students to "conform" to political and religious beliefs, since the end of in loco parentis in the 1960s, at least, one's personal beliefs had nothing to do with liberal learning. Students could explore ideas in the safety of uncertainty, change their minds without documentation, hold provisional opinions without declaring them for institutional assessment. Not any more. To gain admission to selective universities, including top public universities, students are now expected to write personal essays detailing their formative struggles. Once admitted, "civil discourse" requirements may force them to reveal their positions on controversial topics. Sensitive student or college-applicant data or conversations is even being monitored, peer rated, and

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-noxiousness-of-civic-discourse-platforms>

- 52.** If You Care About It, Do It in Class. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol 72. No-10. 16th Jan 2026.

When I was a new instructor, I had a simple three-part plan for teaching writing: My students would read great books before class, learn about them in class, and then write their essays at home. Theoretically, that plan could work if a lot of stars aligned — if the students were super invested in learning to write, if they could apply the techniques I

presented, and if they began writing shortly after class instead of waiting two weeks and completing the essay a day before it was due.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/if-you-care-about-it-do-it-in-class>

- 53.** Mathematics: the engine of AI and quantum technology. University News. Vol.64. No-3. 19-25 Jan 2026. Page No.20-25.

As Artificial Intelligence and Quantum Technology redefine global economic and technological structures, mathematics has emerged not merely as an academic discipline but as strategic capital. In service-led economies such as India, where decades of growth were driven by Information Technology (IT) services, IT Enabled Services (ITES) and process execution, a structural shift is underway. OECD economies are the primary sources of technology contracts that are rapidly transitioning towards automation-first, AI-native, and product-centric models. In this transition, tool-based learning without mathematical foundations risks creating a workforce optimized for obsolescence rather than innovation. This article argues that mathematics is the foundational language of AI and quantum systems, the differentiator between tool users and tool creators, and the decisive factor that will determine whether India remains a strategic technology partner or becomes a commoditized service provider. This paper critically examines the consequences of bypassing mathematics in education, the limitations of tool-centric skill development, and the urgent need to reposition mathematics at the core of future-ready education systems.

- 54.** Implementing NEP-2020 by empowering IGNOU students towards innovation and entrepreneurship. University News. Vol.64. No-3. 19-25 Jan 2026. Page No. 26-34.

The National Education Policy (NEP-2020) is considered to revolutionise the entire education system in the country. Besides focusing on providing multidisciplinary and holistic education, the NEP-2020 aims at fostering creativity, critical thinking, research and innovation among the students for transforming India into a knowledge and self-reliant society. Some of the major thrust areas which are categorically emphasised in NEP-2020 include research and innovation, setting up start-up incubation centers, industry-academic linkages, hand-holding mechanisms for nurturing creative and innovative ideas of students, organizing competitions for promoting innovation and creativity among student communities, and creating a culture for innovation. NEP-2020 also advocates for innovations in teaching and pedagogy, innovation in technology-enabled teaching-learning, curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment, etc., aimed at enabling the higher education institutions to contribute towards an empowered society. In that context, empowerment of an individual, particularly the students in higher education, both in curricular and co-curricular areas, is very important. The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), being a great contributor in the field of higher education, caters to the educational needs of more than 3.7 million students and almost a similar number of alumni.

- 55.** Cultivating entrepreneurship in academics: a qualitative study on industrial mechanisms overcome barriers to institution-based startups in Jaipur. University News. Vol.64. No-3. 19-25 Jan 2026. Page No. 35-37.

Universities/institutions can nurture creativity, innovations and entrepreneurship. They can expose the students to the opportunities in these sectors. They can easily introduce an ecosystem that can support entrepreneurship. They have to create a required policy framework and introduce a required support system that can nurture entrepreneurship. This is the need of the hour. Academic institutions can easily transform the overall academic ecosystem into an ecosystem that nurtures innovation and entrepreneurship.

- 56.** University-industry collaboration as a catalyst for startup development in India. University News. Vol.64. No-3. 19-25 Jan 2026. Page No.38-54.

Across the world, universities are undergoing a profound paradigm shift from being primarily knowledge-providing institutions to becoming active engines of entrepreneurship, innovation, and economic development. In the context of India, this transformation has been substantially augmented over the past decade through a strong national policy thrust on industry engagement, startups, and innovation. As the country is positioning itself as one of the fastest-developing startup hubs globally, the strategic role of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in nurturing entrepreneurial ecosystems has gained unparalleled significance. In this regard, University-Industry Collaboration (UIC) has emerged as a crucial institutional mechanism for translating academic knowledge into commercial or market-oriented innovation and sustainable startup development.

- 57.** India desperately needs deep tech startups to achieve developed nation status by 2047. University News. Vol.64. No-3. 19-25 Jan 2026. Page No. 55- 59.

The paper presents the brief need and importance of deep tech start-ups in a rapidly advancing world, especially in the context of India, aiming to achieve developed nation status by the year 2047. The initiatives taken by the Government are outlined in brief. Deep tech startups essentially require universities to become entrepreneurial, innovative, and to generate advanced breakthrough and disruptive technology so essential for spinning off deep tech enterprises. The changing role of universities and their becoming entrepreneurial in the new world is also presented. Action to be taken by those who matter most, like academic and political leaders in Government and in universities, for shaping them is presented.

- 58.** The academic research-industry nexus framework: a video-mediated digital architecture for strengthening university-industry collaboration in India. University News. Vol.64. No-3. 19-25 Jan 2026. Page No. 60-65.

Universities and industry are increasingly intertwined as engines of innovation, skills development, and regional competitiveness. Researches highlight that well-designed linkages accelerate technology transfer, commercialisation, and graduate employability, but they are complex to build and sustain. Nsanzumuhire and Groot (2020) suggest that University-Industry Collaboration (UIC) primarily operates through three interrelated forms: educational collaboration involving industry participation in curriculum design, internships, training and joint supervision; research collaboration through joint R&D projects and scholarly publications; and academic entrepreneurship manifested in patents, licensing, spin-offs and start-up ventures. They further argue that University-Industry Collaboration faces several major barriers.

- 59.**Teacher education for increasing entrepreneurship mindset. University News. Vol.64. No-3. 19-25 Jan 2026. Page No. 66-69.

The uprising in global economies driven by technological advances, digitalisation and socio-economic complexities has sensitised the need for entrepreneurship as a key lever for sustainable development and employment generation. Entrepreneurship has emerged as one of the most important competencies for the contemporary workforce. Contemporary teacher education institutions play a crucial role in equipping students not only with academic and pedagogical skills but also with an entrepreneurial mindset that promotes creativity, resilience, risk taking and problem-solving. Teacher education institutions, which historically focused on cognitive and pedagogical knowledge, are now expected to produce teachers capable of initiating ventures and designing solutions to societal problems.

- 60.** University-industry linkage for fostering startup ecosystem in higher education institutions. University News. Vol.64. No-3. 19-25 Jan 2026. Page No. 70-72.

The landscape of University-Industry linkage (U-I-L) in India has transformed into a vibrant ecosystem. In the pursuit of building a robust ecosystem for entrepreneurship/start-ups in India, the instruments of industry-academia linkage play a pivotal role. Ultimately these linkages are crucial to driving innovation, fostering economic growth, and addressing the country's socio-economic challenges.

- 61.** Reimagining higher education for a fin tech-powered India: academia-industry action. University News. Vol.64. No-3. 19-25 Jan 2026. Page No. 73-74.

The Global FinTech Fest (GFF) 2025, held in Mumbai, marked a defining moment for India's higher education sector. It reinforced Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of India as a global FinTech leader powered by youth, innovation, and inclusive digital infrastructure. This article explores how universities and colleges can become active partners in realising that vision through curriculum innovation, research collaboration, and industry engagement. The article demonstrates how academia-industry collaboration can translate PM Modi's GFF 2025 vision into campus practice.

- 62.** India's startup ecosystem: an incredible opportunity for university student's#. University News. Vol.64. No-3. 19-25 Jan 2026. Page No.75-79.

According to the United Nation's estimates, India, home to 1.4 billion people, has surpassed mainland China to become the world's most populous country. Malin & Tyagi (2023) observed that India has potential advantages, especially at a time when countries around the world are facing declining birth rates and tight labour markets. India is home to more than 600 million people aged between 18 and 35, with 65% under the age of 25. India's demographic dividend is expected to persist at least until 2055-56 and will peak around 2041 when the share of the working-age population - 20-59 years - is expected to hit 59%. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has envisioned India to be the skill capital of the world and called entrepreneurs India's 'growth ambassadors'. The nation's ambitions to become a global manufacturing hub are closely linked to its ability to upskill its youths.

- 63.** Ed tech is profitable. It is also mostly useless. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

McPherson Middle School in Kansas had been burned before by education technology, but in 2022 school leaders were ready to try again. They selected a digital programme called IXL from a statewide recommendation list. It promised instruction tailored to each student's level, igniting quick gains. The school used it to assign most in-class independent maths work. "We thought it was going to be really magical," says Inge Esping, the principal.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2026/01/22/ed-tech-is-profitable-it-is-also-mostly-useless>

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

64. Time for humans to reboot. Frontline. Vol.43. No-1. 16-31 Jan 2026.

We are living in the future. The 2020s used to be a favourite setting for science fiction novels. Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? Written by Philip K. Dick in 1968 was set in 2021; specifically, on January 3, 2021. Octavia Butler's Parable of the Sower opens with a series of diary entries. The first entry is dated July 20, 2024. Kim Stanley Robinson, in his Mars trilogy, dated the first manned missions to the planet to the 2020s. His climate disaster novel, The Ministry for the Future, a must-read for all climate-caring book fiends, kicks things off with a brutal heatwave in 2025; it kills millions in Uttar Pradesh.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/society/when-language-stopped-being-human-ai-future/article70452638.ece>

65. Aye to AI, no to life. Frontline. Vol.43. No-1. 16-31 Jan 2026.

Remember when psychologically scarred, socially awkward and/or undesirable people turned to sex dolls for intimacy? Well, in 2025, many of them turned to AI apps and make-believe. Have you experienced AI popping up on your screen and offering to write responses to your office emails? Also, let's not forget those glossy videos regularly released by Elon Musk that show humans eating burgers and strolling hand in hand on Mars.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/society/ai-reshaping-human-life-2025/article70439055.ece>

66. The algorithm's gonna get you. Frontline. Vol.43. No-1. 16-31 Jan 2026.

I registered two big words in social media in 2025. One is "slop", the endless torrent of AI-generated fakery in which the Internet is now knee-deep. It's so pervasive that The Economist picked it as its word of the year. The other is "authenticity", an outcome of social media ennui that makes users reject picture-perfect influencers and brands in favour of more relatable, more "genuine" and "human" people and posts.

ENVIRONMENT

- 67.** Toxic Engines in an Asphyxiated Nation. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.61. No-3. 17th Jan 2026.

We breathe, therefore we are. But when the vehicle of life itself becomes the vehicle of death, it calls for immediate attention and action. Air pollution is a form of violence. It violates the right to life. It robs people of their health and livelihood. Humans and animals fall sick. People struggle to breathe. In the long run, it is fatal. It reduces the human lifespan from two months to five years. It destroys vegetation, landscapes, and ways of living. Concerned citizens are alarmed. Respiratory problems among children have spiked. Hospitals get flooded with breathless patients. Some have opened pollution outpatient departments. For doctors, it is a national emergency. Helpless parents seek judicial interventions. Schools and workplaces shut down. Life comes to a standstill. Cities feel smothered with smog. Civil society protests are muzzled. Emission standards are poor. Public transport is not scaled up. Privatisation of land is rampant. Roads are dusty or broken. Cities, towns, and villages are suffocated. “Vishwaguru” is running out of breath in “Swachh Bharat.”

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2026/3/editorials/toxic-engines-asphyxiated-nation.html>

- 68.** Air Pollution in India. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.61. No-3. 17th Jan 2026.

The air pollution in Indian cities is the structural outcome of speculative metropolitan expansion. Drawing on remote-sensing evidence from the Hyderabad Metropolitan Region, the article shows how the state’s pursuit of real-estate-driven growth, infrastructure-led expansion, and the relocation of polluting industries to the periphery is leading to the creation of new hotspots of air pollution. Ironically, the same middle-class homeowners who demanded infrastructure-intensive, gated urbanism now find themselves exposed to the environmental consequences of the model they endorsed.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2026/3/commentary/air-pollution-india.html>

- 69.** India needs new economic thinking to fight air pollution. Frontline. Vol.43. No-1. 16-31 Jan 2026.

On December 1, Union Minister for Environment and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav claimed in the Lok Sabha that stubble burning by farmers in Punjab and Haryana had not only declined significantly—the lowest since the COVID-19 years—but was also an “episodic” event. That day, Delhi’s Air Quality Index stood north of 250, as did the AQI of most towns and cities of north India.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/environment/india-air-pollution-economic-thinking/article70448700.ece>

HEALTH

70. Britain's good idea for custom genetic medicines. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

RARE DISEASES are, individually, rare. Collectively, however, they are anything but. They affect perhaps 300m people around the world. Many are highly debilitating. Plenty cut young lives tragically short. Some 80% are caused by faulty genes. Breakthroughs in genomics (which let doctors find problem mutations) and genomic medicines (which edit mutated DNA or disrupt how it is turned into proteins) mean that more and more are treatable. Yet sufferers are seldom treated.

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2026/01/22/britains-good-idea-for-custom-genetic-medicines>

71. The most useful indicator of your overall health. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

Modern smart watches can measure all sorts of health indicators. Step counts and heart rates sit at the simpler end of the array, whereas VO2 max and blood-oxygen levels are of more interest to committed health nuts. But a category currently attracting particular attention is heart-rate variability (HRV).

<https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2026/01/16/the-most-useful-indicator-of-your-overall-health>

72. A new study highlights the brain's role in immune health. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

The placebo effect, in which a patient's subjective belief can affect the efficacy of treatment, was once maligned as dubious and unscientific, but is now recognised as a genuine, albeit poorly understood, therapeutic tool. In a study published this week in Nature Medicine, researchers have begun to lift the lid on its inner workings by demonstrating that positive expectations can boost the immune system's response to vaccination.

<https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2026/01/21/a-new-study-highlights-the-brains-role-in-immune-health>

HISTORY

73. From 50 Years Ago: Indian Capitalist Class and the Public Sector, 1930-1947. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.61. No-3. 17th Jan 2026.

In the period 1930-47, i e, in less than two decades, were capsuled two of the major events in the history of world capitalism, the depression and the Second World War. In spite of

their varying impact, not only between the advanced capitalist world and its colonial counterpart, but within the various sections of the advanced capitalist world itself, these events left a fundamental mark on the capitalist system. This period, on the one hand, saw the third major technological breakthrough in world capitalism after the first and the second industrial revolutions; on the other hand, it was also a period of deep capitalist crisis, which laid bare its basic defects and contradictions. The need was now felt all over the capitalist world to strike out a new path, to create certain institutional changes which would enable stable capitalist development, and give it “a fresh lease of life”. The urgency of reform must have been greatly enhanced by the fact that the socialist alternative was now seen as a real threat.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/50-years-ago/50-years-ago-indian-capitalist-class-and-public.html>

74. Seeing Cuttack. India Forum. 9th Jan 2026.

Cuttack first came to me as a palimpsest of stories in which the personal, the historical, and the mythological mingled without clear distinction. From my father, I learnt that it was the city where my paternal grandfather spent his final days in penury, shuttling between his workplace in the Old Secretariat and the Cuttack Medical Hospital, attending to the contingencies of my great-grandfather’s failing health. It was also the place where my father’s great-granduncle, Kasinath Das Choudhuri—five generations before me—co-convened, in 1889, the first meeting of the Utkal Samaj— an organisation that would go on to take up the Oriya nationalist cause and culminate in the creation of a separate province in 1936 (Nayak 2003). The stories of my grandfather making a stop at the Chandi Maa of Cuttack were not lost on me as a child, especially the mesmerising tale of her emergence from beneath the ground after she appeared in a priest’s dream, instructing him to dig the soil.

<https://www.theindiaforum.in/culture/seeing-cuttack>

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

75. Chinese AI is a risk for Europe. So is shunning it. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

ON JANUARY 20TH 2025 DeepSeek was an obscure hedge-fund-turned-tech-startup from Hangzhou. Within a week it had become the byword for a new wave of Chinese innovation, after launching an artificial-intelligence model as capable as Silicon Valley’s bleeding edge but much cheaper to build and run. Having slugged it out in China’s cut-throat domestic market over the past year, DeepSeek and its homespun rivals are looking abroad for profits. They will not find the largest ones in America, increasingly out of geopolitical bounds, or the poorer global south. That leaves Europe as the likely recipient of their attention.

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2026/01/22/chinese-ai-is-a-risk-for-europe-so-is-shunning-it>

76. Western leaders navigate a lonely world. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

FOR MID-SIZED liberal democracies, 2026 threatens to be a lonely year. Western leaders are menaced and mocked by an America whose protection they need for now, like courtiers enduring the taunts of a king turned old and cruel. To make their solitude complete, China, today's other great power, neither will nor can become the West's alternative friend.

<https://www.economist.com/briefing/2026/01/20/western-leaders-navigate-a-lonely-world>

77. Who really won the war between India and Pakistan?. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

THE FOG of war can make it difficult to understand what is happening during a conflict. Sometimes that murkiness can persist long after the guns have fallen silent. That is proving true of the four-day skirmish between India and Pakistan that took place last May. This writer recently spoke to a wide range of Indian military and security officials on the lessons that the country took from Operation Sindoor, as the Indians dubbed their part in the conflict. They differ dramatically from those drawn by Pakistan. That greatly raises the risk of miscalculations when the two countries next come to blows.

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2026/01/22/who-really-won-the-war-between-india-and-pakistan>

78. Donald Trump's adventurism is unsettling China. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

Surveying his geopolitical scorecard last year, Xi Jinping had reasons to be cheerful. China's leader stared down his American counterpart, Donald Trump, in a trade war, presented a vision of a new world order at a military parade and stalled efforts to oust a Hong Kong-based company from ports it runs on the Panama Canal.

<https://www.economist.com/china/2026/01/20/donald-trumps-adventurism-is-unsettling-china>

79. Britain's Chagos disposal looks like an idea out of time. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

Of all the surprises thrown up by Donald Trump's second term, among the most curious has been his courteous relationship with Sir Keir Starmer, Britain's stiff, left-wing prime minister.

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2026/01/22/britains-chagos-disposal-looks-like-an-idea-out-of-time>

80. Donald Trump's bullying is irritating his European populist chums. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

Donald Trump's threats "against the sovereignty of a state" are "unacceptable", declared one European political leader on January 17th, after the American president threatened to impose an additional 10% tariff on eight European countries that sent military personnel

to Greenland. “Commercial blackmail is equally intolerable,” he added. Two weeks earlier the same leader criticised America’s capture of Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela: “Respect for international law and the sovereignty of states cannot be applied selectively.”

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2026/01/20/donald-trumps-bullying-is-irritating-his-european-populist-chums>

81. Russia’s no-show in Venezuela weakens its bad-boy image. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

When the Kremlin announced that Vladimir Putin would make an “important statement on international affairs” on January 15th, the first since America’s military intervention in Venezuela and the mass protests in Iran, most observers braced themselves for a barrage of his typical belligerence. Instead Russia’s president sounded like a peacenik. He lauded co-operation and lamented disregard for international law and infringements on small countries’ sovereignty. “Instead of having states engage in dialogue with one another, there are those relying on might-makes-right...to impose their will,” he told foreign diplomats, four years after his full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2026/01/22/russias-no-show-in-venezuela-weakens-its-bad-boy-image>

82. In It Together: India and the EU can access the untapped economic potential of their relationship at last. Open Magazine. 31st Jan 2026.

AS CHIEF GUESTS FOR India’s 77th Republic Day parade, European Union (EU) leaders Ursula von der Leyen and António Costa brought much more than optics. From Brussels to New Delhi, they carried intent and substance. And 2026 may finally be the year that the narrative of ‘untapped potential’ that has accompanied EU-India ties for decades is discredited.

<https://openthemagazine.com/india/in-it-together-india-and-the-eu-can-access-the-untapped-economic-potential-of-their-relationship-at-last>

LAW

83. 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. The Act clearly mentions that it is being enacted to remove the historical injustice done to forest dwellers. Its enactment not only gives a legal imprint to the traditional rights of forest dwellers but also has the potential to achieve the objectives of

social justice, decentralisation of power, and forest conservation through community participation.

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

84. To whom is NPCI Accountable? India Forum. 8th Jan 2026.

In October, when the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced that cheques would be cleared within a few hours instead of days, the technology in question—the Cheque Truncation System—came, yet again, from the stables of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). Other products from the NPCI include the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), RuPay cards, Bharat Bill Pay Payment Service (BPPS), FASTag, Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), Aadhaar Enabled Payment Services (AePS), RuPay credit card, National Automated Clearing House, and the BHIM-UPI mobile application. Among these products, UPI, which is the NPCI’s crown jewel, logged 20.47 billion monthly transactions amounting to Rs. 26.32 lakh crore in November alone.

<https://www.theindiaforum.in/society/whom-npci-accountable>

85. Surgical strike on the poor. Frontline. Vol.43. No-1. 16-31 Jan 2026.

On December 18, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was repealed and replaced by the Viksit Bharat—Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill, or the VB-GRAMG Bill, the Narendra Modi government’s most successful surgical strike on the working poor so far. It has destroyed the right to work and removed a rights-based legislation that has enrolled 26 crore registered workers for the scheme. Prime Minister Modi’s unequivocal statement of intent in Parliament in 2015 was that the MGNREGA would be kept alive only to remind us of the “monumental failure” of the law and of the then United Progressive Alliance government’s efforts. But the fact remains that even in its neglected and deliberately undermined form, the MGNREGA served as a lifeline to the rural poor.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/the-nation/mgnrega-repeal-vb-gramg-right-to-work-india/article70459731.ece>

86. The Flip Side of Defamation. Open Magazine. 31st Jan 2026.

Stating that it didn’t have jurisdiction, the Delhi High Court, on January 29, dismissed the defamation case that former narcotics officer Sameer Wankhede had filed against the makers of *Ba***ds of Bollywood* for defaming him. In 2021, the show’s director, Aryan Khan, son of Shah Rukh Khan, had been arrested by Wankhede in an alleged drug bust on a cruise ship’s rave party. When Khan came out with his hit Netflix comedy show last year, he took a swipe back by portraying a character that resembled Wankhede. You would think a law enforcement officer should be protected against such mockery, but that is only taking half the context into contention.

<https://openthemagazine.com/india/the-flip-side-of-defamation>

LITERATURE

87. Are we all plagiarists now?. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

It is a truth universally acknowledged that people get away with plagiarism a lot—even when the line they are plagiarising is “It is a truth universally acknowledged...” In 2007 chapters of Jane Austen’s “Pride and Prejudice” were sent with minor variations to 18 editors, purporting to be a “new” novel entitled “First Impressions”. Despite it containing one of the most famous lines in English literature, only one editor called out the hoaxer. “My first impression” on reading “First Impressions”, he replied with Austenian archness, was “mild annoyance” then “laughter”.

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2026/01/22/are-we-all-plagiarists-now>

88. The Quiet House. New Yorker. 2nd Feb 2026.

Geraldine woke out of busy dreams into the calms and shallows of old age. There were two skylights in her attic bedroom, and when she opened her eyes she saw clouds floating past, slow and stately against a pale sky; the angular under-shape of a gull’s flight was printed for a moment, soundless beyond the glass. She was alone in the absolutely quiet house: she was used to this and it mostly felt like freedom, after the long years of her marriage. In her dreams, however, she had been plunged back into the thick of things—noisy crowds of people, children, movement, a train journey, talk, pleasure, sociable effort. She’d dreamed that Mattie Szymanski came to visit her on a bicycle and was still young, with his curly brown hair and a thick beard, which wasn’t attractive now but used to be. She’d known in her dream that in reality Mattie was long dead—he’d died in his forties, by which time he’d lost most of his hair—but she wasn’t sure whether he knew it, and this made their encounter especially numinous and poignant. He had called in at some house that must have been her house, and wanted to show her a novel he’d written, a typed carbon copy on thin paper. She was trying to put this novel back into its manila folder but the pages kept slipping and getting out of order, she couldn’t keep them together. As far as she knew, in real life Mattie had never written a novel or anything much, apart from his unfinished thesis on Hardy’s tragic heroes.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2026/02/02/the-quiet-house-fiction-tessa-hadley>

89. Jess, Tyehimba

Where Is the Shrine to Johnny Shines?. New Yorker. 2nd Feb 2026.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2026/02/02/where-is-the-shrine-to-johnny-shines-tyehimba-jess-poem>

90. Alvarez, Julia

Mami at Her Vanity. New Yorker. 2nd Feb 2026.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2026/02/02/mami-at-her-vanity-julia-alvarez-poem>

MILITARY SCIENCE

- 91.** A chilling, yet plausible scenario: What if Putin wins?. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

The job of military scenario planner has never been harder. Just this month Donald Trump has kidnapped Venezuela's despot, threatened armed action against Colombia, Cuba, Iran and Mexico, started a stand-off with NATO allies over Greenland and finally got his hands on a Nobel peace medal (without winning it). Who could have foreseen all that?

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2026/01/22/a-chilling-yet-plausible-scenario-what-if-putin-wins>

- 92.** Ukraine's new air-defence whiz must stop a redoubled blitz. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

KYIV'S NIGHTTIME curfew has been in force through nearly four years of war, unchanged even on New Year's Eve. But on January 16th authorities relaxed most of its provisions, allowing people to leave their homes to seek warmth. The decision was a response to a growing humanitarian threat in the capital. Russian air assaults are wrecking the damaged energy grid just as temperatures plunge to -20°C. An attack overnight on January 19th left 1m users without electricity, with several thousand homes cut off from the city's central heating system. Emergency services are struggling to patch the grid. The capital seems a few steps away from a disaster.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2026/01/22/ukraines-new-air-defence-whiz-must-stop-a-redoubled-blitz>

POLITICAL SCIENCE & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

- 93.** Law Reads Literature. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.61. No-3. 17th Jan 2026.

The sudden discontinuation of the JCB Prize for Literature, sponsored by J C Bamford Excavators in 2025, reignited questions about the politics of literary recognition and the fragility of platforms supporting Indian-language writing. Tamil author Perumal Murugan, the 2023 JCB winner, had himself been at the centre of a major literary controversy a decade earlier, when his novel faced public backlash and calls for censorship. This article revisits that episode, not merely as a case of literary suppression but as a moment when the judiciary, specifically the Madras High Court, intervened with an act of literary reading.

- 94.** Privatisation and Postmodern Governance. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.61. No-3. 17th Jan 2026.

Privatisation and postmodern governance have reconfigured the terrain of urban labour, and dismantled collective solidarities while reinforcing caste-based occupational hierarchies. The Chennai sanitation workers' protest exposes how neo-liberal reforms, through outsourcing and decentralisation, diffuse accountability, entrench precarity, and fragment labour struggles. The protest exemplifies the broader crisis of neo-liberal urbanism, where dissent is contained and citizenship redefined through market logics.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2026/3/insight/privatisation-and-postmodern-governance.html>

- 95.** 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>

- 96.** The true danger posed by Donald Trump. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

EUROPEANS EXPECTED a diatribe, but in Davos Donald Trump was almost conciliatory. He demanded "right, title and ownership" of Greenland, but abandoned tariffs, ruled out force and later hailed a new "framework" and a possible deal.

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2026/01/21/the-true-danger-posed-by-donald-trump>

- 97.** The odd thing about Modi's mojo. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

Narendra Modi, India's prime minister, was humbled in 2024. His party lost its national majority and had to start ruling in coalition. Policymaking looked listless for most of the next 12 months. Some thought the re-election of Donald Trump, with whom Mr Modi once got on famously, would strengthen his hand. Instead America's president whacked most Indian exports with tariffs, which now add up to 50%.

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2026/01/22/the-odd-thing-about-modis-mojo>

- 98.** Trump's Board of Peace is a distraction from the real work in Gaza. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

Donald Trump claims to have ended eight "unendable" wars in his second term. In some cases he exaggerates his role; in others the fighting rages on. In Gaza, though, he really did impose a ceasefire, force Israel to withdraw from populated areas and compel Hamas to release its hostages.

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2026/01/22/trumps-board-of-peace-is-a-distraction-from-the-real-work-in-gaza>

- 99.** Donald Trump's expansionist itch has undermined global security. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

FIRST CAME the recapitulation: "It is the United States alone that can protect this giant mass of land, this giant piece of ice, develop it and improve it," Donald Trump told the political leaders and captains of industry assembled at the World Economic Forum in Switzerland this week. "And that's the reason I'm seeking immediate negotiations to once again discuss the acquisition of Greenland by the United States." Then, just hours later, came the capitulation: he and Mark Rutte, the secretary-general of NATO, "have formed the framework of a future deal with respect to Greenland", Mr Trump said on social media, and as a result, his threatened tariffs on eight NATO members, intended to coerce them into supporting his land-grab, would be rescinded.

<https://www.economist.com/briefing/2026/01/22/donald-trumps-expansionist-itch-has-undermined-global-security>

- 100.** The remarkable recovery of Narendra Modi. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

SIXTEEN MONTHS ago Narendra Modi looked chastened. Having just lost his majority in a national election, the chest-thumping Indian leader was forced to lean on regional parties. His coalition showed little appetite for difficult reform. Some commentators pronounced it "Peak Modi". Would-be successors began to plot.

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2026/01/21/the-remarkable-recovery-of-narendra-modi>

- 101.** Japan's popular new prime minister gambles on a snap election. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

Takaichi Sanae's confidence is immense. Since she took the helm of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (Ldp) and became Japan's first female prime minister last October her administration's approval ratings in many polls have consistently exceeded 70%. At a press conference on January 19th, less than 100 days into her term, she confirmed what had long been rumoured in the Japanese press. She called a snap election for Japan's powerful lower house, to be held on February 8th.

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2026/01/19/japans-popular-new-prime-minister-gambles-on-a-snap-election>

- 102.** Xi Jinping is carrying Deng Xiaoping's authoritarian torch in China. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

Signs of xi jinping's power cover China. The latest came on January 17th when the Communist Party's anti-graft watchdog announced that it had punished 983,000 individuals last year, an annual record. Beyond his iron fist is the force of his leadership. "Xi Jinping Thought" has been written into the constitution. Officials at every level declare

their fealty to him as the party's "core". Students memorise his nuggets of wisdom, of which there is no shortage. The fifth volume of his works on governance was published last year.

<https://www.economist.com/china/2026/01/19/xi-jinping-is-carrying-deng-xiaopings-authoritarian-torch-in-china>

103. Lisa Cook's job at the Federal Reserve looks safe. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

JEROME POWELL, chair of the Federal Reserve and now the target of a federal investigation, watched from the public gallery on January 21st as the Supreme Court considered the fate of his embattled colleague, Lisa Cook. In 2023 Joe Biden appointed Ms Cook to a 14-year term on the Fed's board of governors. In August President Donald Trump tried to sack her, alleging she had made false statements on mortgage applications. He wrote then that "deceitful and potentially criminal conduct in a financial matter" prompted him to dismiss her.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2026/01/21/lisa-cooks-job-at-the-federal-reserve-looks-safe>

104. Maharashtra local body election marks BJP's solo moment. Frontline. Vol.43. No-1. 16-31 Jan.2026.

In the first round of local body elections in Maharashtra, the BJP emerged as the largest party. Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena finished second but lost key cities to its ally. The opposition alliance Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) won only 52 of 288 municipal councils and nagar panchayats, with Congress managing to survive in pockets of Vidarbha, while Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena and Sharad Pawar's NCP were virtually wiped out from semi-urban Maharashtra.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/politics/maharashtra-local-polls-bjp-2025/article70425735.ece>

105. Aland gives the opposition a ready-made, damning case file. Frontline. Vol.43. No-1. 16-31 Jan.2026.

Aland, located in the most backward Kalyana Karnataka region, has been making national headlines for over three months now over attempts to illegally disenfranchise voters. The case first came to light when a Booth Level Officer (BLO) in a village in Aland Assembly constituency received an application in February 2023 seeking deletion of the name of a voter who happened to be the BLO's brother. The discovery that the application was fake led to the unearthing of a racket targeting legitimate voters in the constituency; the former BJP MLA from Aland, Subash Guttedar, seems to be at the centre of it.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/politics/aland-voter-deletion-scam-election-commission/article70452015.ece>

106. A scenario for a Conservative comeback in Britain. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

Politicians are routinely accused of being shameless. Nigel Farage has a novel solution. At a press conference on January 15th he told reporters he was “getting in people who are apologetic, indeed ashamed, of what they’d done in the past.” Beside him Robert Jenrick, his newest recruit (and better known for being shameless), shifted in his seat.

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2026/01/22/a-scenario-for-a-conservative-comeback-in-britain>

107. Trump’s Greenland Fiasco. New Yorker. 2nd Feb 2026.

In 1978, Václav Havel, the Czech playwright, dissident, and future President, wrote an essay, distributed clandestinely, that tells of a greengrocer who hangs a sign in his shopwindow reading “Workers of the World, Unite!” He doesn’t actually believe in this hollow slogan, nor do his customers—rather, they are all engaged in a performative ritual, a paean to a Communist system, which, through their act, they help perpetuate.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2026/02/02/trumps-greenland-fiasco>

108. What MAGA Can Teach Democrats About Organizing—and Infighting. New Yorker. 2nd Feb 2026.

Americans who came of age in the nineteen-eighties will remember the emergence of two organizations that aimed to convert people to a cause, revolutionize social norms, and build enduring grassroots movements—Dare and madd.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2026/02/02/what-maga-can-teach-democrats-about-organizing-and-infighting>

109. How Shinzo Abe’s Assassination Brought the Moonies Back Into the Limelight. New Yorker. 2nd Feb 2026.

Shinzo Abe, the former Prime Minister of Japan, was speaking at a political rally near a train station in the city of Nara when the shots rang out. It was an unfamiliar sound; it’s essentially illegal for Japanese civilians to own guns, and firearm-related deaths are very rare. The noise was so strange that only some of the rally-goers flinched.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2026/02/02/how-shinzo-abes-assassination-brought-the-moonies-back-into-the-limelight>

110. The Cruelty and Theatre of the Trump Press Conference. New Yorker. 2nd Feb 2026.

On January 3rd, in Palm Beach, Florida, Donald Trump stood behind the lectern at a press conference, to regale members of the media about the capture of Nicolás Maduro, the Venezuelan President. Tan and hoarse, sloshing his syllables together imprecisely, Trump looked and sounded like someone who’d rushed away from a sedate moment of his vacation to take a work call. He gave a short speech about the operation in Caracas, sometimes looking up from his prepared text to offer seemingly impromptu annotations: “It was an assault like people have not seen since”—here he took a pause, searching the air for an apt point of reference—“*World War Two*.” The military officers’ work there and in other recent actions was “all perfectly executed and done.”

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2026/02/02/the-presidential-press-conference-spin>

- 111.** India-EU FTA: A Deal for the Times. Open Magazine. 31st Jan 2026.

AROUND THE TIME MAROS SEFCOVIC WAS APPOINTED EUROPEAN Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security in December 2024, a top European Union (EU) official conveyed to the Indian political leadership that the bloc's best negotiator had been assigned the task of quickening negotiations for a free trade agreement (FTA) that had taken a backseat because of elections in India and in Europe. The re-election of Ursula von der Leyen as president of the European Commission for a second five-year term in July 2024, soon after Prime Minister Narendra Modi returned to office for a third term, set the stage for accelerated dialogue on a trade deal often bogged down in bureaucratic banalities.

<https://openthemagazine.com/india/india-eu-fta-a-deal-for-the-times>

- 112.** Netaji and the Grammar of Power in India's Foreign Policy. Open Magazine. 31st Jan 2026.

During times of global turmoil, nations frequently rediscover their forgotten philosophers. As India's current foreign policy—confident, multi-aligned, and overtly strategic- has generated many references to civilizational wisdom, realism, and strategic autonomy. However, one of its most radical and underappreciated influencers is Subhas Chandra Bose, a man whose thoughts about international politics were decades ahead of the state he never lived to govern.

<https://openthemagazine.com/india/netaji-and-the-grammar-of-power-in-indias-foreign-policy>

- 113.** BJP-Sena Leads 100 seats, On Way To Control BMC. Open Magazine. 31st Jan 2026.

After over two decades of the undivided Shiv Sena's control of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), early trends indicated that the Mahayuti alliance of the BJP and Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena was set to win Mumbai's municipal body.

<https://openthemagazine.com/politics/bjp-sena-leads-100-seats-on-way-to-control-bmc>

SCIENCE

- 114.** Rethinking Ethics and Informed Consent in Medical Genetics. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol.61. No-3. 17th Jan 2026.

While informed consent is a central theme in biomedical ethics, there are structural obstacles that compromise its implementation, particularly in genetic research. These

include the hierarchical authority of science, unequal relations between researchers and participants, and the linguistic and conceptual barriers that prevent laypersons from fully grasping scientific knowledge. International and national ethical frameworks emphasise autonomy and protection of vulnerable groups, yet often fall short in practice. The discussion extends to the contentious idea of broad consent, which risks undermining participant rights.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2026/3/commentary/rethinking-ethics-and-informed-consent-medical.html>

115. Satellites encased in wood are in the works. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

LignoSat's communications failed as it was launched from the International Space Station (ISS) on December 9th 2024 (see picture above). But it was a breakthrough all the same. For much of it was made of magnolia, a wood its builders at Kyoto University had picked for its strength, ease of working and (as demonstrated by previous experiments on the ISS) resilience to the hostile environment of space.

<https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2026/01/21/satellites-encased-in-wood-are-in-the-works>

116. A German company is poised to send a rocket into space from Norway. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

Under the shimmering aurora borealis, a rocket readies for take-off beside a Norwegian fjord. Isar Aerospace, a German startup, is running countdown procedures at the Andoya Space Centre, hoping for the first time to put an object into orbit from continental Europe. The launch, first scheduled for January 21st but delayed for technical reasons, is expected any day. If successful, it would mark a leap for Europe's modest space ambitions.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2026/01/22/a-german-company-is-poised-to-send-a-rocket-into-space-from-norway>

SOCIOLOGY

117. Homegrown apps are making dating in India less awkward. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

IMAGINE SHOWING up for a first date with someone you met online, only to find your romantic prospect has brought along their mum. In India that experience is not uncommon. The country's unique dating culture requires homegrown dating apps—or so say a horde of entrepreneurs who are trying to part lonely hearts from their cash. By one count India has more than 2,500 matchmaking startups, perhaps the most in the world.

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2026/01/22/homegrown-apps-are-making-dating-in-india-less-awkward>

- 118.** On Scotland's nationalist fringes, a new Tartan intolerance rises. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

From a distance, it looked like just another rally for Scottish independence: Saltires billowing in the wind, slogans broadcast through a megaphone, the sound of the bagpipes blasting from a portable speaker. At gatherings like this you can usually guess what kind of Scotland those attending yearn to see: an independent progressive country alongside the Nordics, where strangers are welcome. But the activists beside Aberdeen's seafront on January 18th had come with a very different message: "stop the boats". This crowd, which had gathered outside a hotel housing asylum-seekers, chanted "remigration now" and "save our kids", as speakers warned that native Scots are being replaced in their homeland.

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2026/01/22/on-scotlands-nationalist-fringes-a-new-tartan-intolerance-rises>

- 119.** An awful crash blots Spain's gleaming super-fast trains. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

Spain's high-speed train network, the world's second longest, is a national pride and joy. Whisking passengers across a large country, it is a daily convenience and a symbol of modernity and efficiency. So a crash on the evening of January 18th, in which at least 43 people were killed and over 150 injured when two high-speed trains collided in Andalucía, has shaken Spaniards. It will also raise questions about priorities in infrastructure spending.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2026/01/22/an-awful-crash-blots-spains-gleaming-super-fast-trains>

- 120.** How to Woo with Words Alone. New Yorker. 2nd Feb 2026.

No one wants to write these days. Kids send voice notes. Boomers blast out Bitmoji. A.I. is depressingly inescapable. So, when Philip Leif Bjerknes, a marketer and former Craigslist dater, designed a text-based, photo-free dating app, he knew that some prospective users might need help expressing themselves. Machine-generated slop would undermine his whole endeavor, which he'd decided to call Oh Hi. "The last thing a date wants is someone who can't be bothered," Bjerknes, who met his current girlfriend speed dating, said. "It's literally called a *personal*. Like, if it's not personal, you've sort of lost the plot."

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2026/02/02/how-to-woo-with-words-alone>

- 121.** Did a Celebrated Researcher Obscure a Baby's Poisoning?. New Yorker. 2nd Feb 2026.

On April 18, 2005, a Canadian woman named Rani Jamieson gave birth to a healthy boy. It was an unremarkable pregnancy but a painful delivery; a doctor had to use surgical scissors to make room for her son's head. Afterward, the doctor prescribed her Tylenol No. 3, which combines the mild opioid codeine with acetaminophen.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2026/02/02/did-a-celebrated-researcher-obscure-a-fatal-poisoning>

SPORTS

122. Welcome to the wild world of skijoring. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

FANS SWING their clanging cowbells and tiptoe around steaming piles of horse dung as they make their way to the bleachers. They peer down the racecourse at athletes who are wearing cowboy hats, fringed chaps and snowsuits. Vendors sell sweatshirts that read: “Will shake my ass for cowboys”. It’s a sunny day in Heber City, Utah, and the first-ever pro skijoring tour is about to begin.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2026/01/22/welcome-to-the-wild-world-of-skijoring>

WILDLIFE

123. To disperse their spores, truffles rely on animals eating other animals. Economist. 24th Jan 2026.

Truffles, which come in many guises, not just those regarded as delicacies by humans, are the fruiting bodies of fungi—the underground equivalents of mushrooms. Unlike mushrooms, however, they cannot shed their spores into the air, to be scattered by the wind. Instead, they rely on being eaten and the spores they contain (pictured) then being deposited elsewhere once they have passed through the gut of the diner.

<https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2026/01/21/to-disperse-their-spores-truffles-rely-on-animals-eating-other-animals>

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	India Forum	W	India
6	New Yorker	W	New York
7	Open Magazine	W	India
8	University News	W	New Delhi