

## ARTICLE ALERT 1-15 DECEMBER 2025

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# ART

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1. God Bless “A Christmas Carol,” Every One. New Yorker. 8th December 2025.  
No less characteristic of the holidays than tree lights or candy canes are stagings of “A Christmas Carol,” Charles Dickens’s 1843 novella about the importance of valuing people over profits. Prominent among this year’s New York productions is a British import: PAC NYC hosts Matthew Warchus and Jack Thorne’s immersive, lantern-lit adaptation (through Jan. 4), complete with gingerbread cookies and clementines for the audience. First performed at the Old Vic, in 2017, the show has been revived in London every year since and has toured on Broadway and beyond. The current iteration stars Michael Cerveris as the harrumphing miser Ebenezer Scrooge; Cerveris’s experience playing prickly types, from the emotionally withholding father in “Fun Home” to the sociopathic Sweeney Todd, should make for a potent incarnation.

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/goings-on/god-bless-a-christmas-carol-every-one>

2. “An Enemy of the People” Becomes a Spanish Opera. New Yorker. 8th December 2025.

Opera landed in Spain in 1627, less than three decades after the art first arose, in Florence. That year, Italian expatriates in Madrid presented “La Selva sin Amor” (“The Forest without Love”), with a libretto by the towering Spanish playwright Félix Lope de Vega and music by Filippo Piccinini and Bernardo Monanni. No one took much notice. At a time when Lope de Vega, Calderón de la Barca, and Cervantes were weaving verbal spells upon the stage, music must have seemed a superfluous addition—just as, in England, the mighty lines of Marlowe and Shakespeare hardly cried out for melodic elaboration. A few decades later, the first zarzuela operas launched a homegrown music-theatre tradition, although their mixture of song and spoken text proved difficult to export. In the centuries that followed, Spanish opera found little international resonance. To date, the Met has staged only two works from Spain: Enrique Granados’s “Goyescas,” in 1916, and Manuel de Falla’s “La Vida Breve,” in 1926.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/08/an-enemy-of-the-people-becomes-a-spanish-opera>

3. “The Secret Agent” Is a Political Thriller Teeming with Life. New Yorker. 8th December 2025.

The protagonist of “The Secret Agent” isn’t a secret agent; he only lives like one. The reason for his clandestine maneuvering is apparent from the film’s first scene, when he pulls into a gas station on a country road. Before he can drive off with his tank replenished, the police show up. The officers’ arrival is no surprise: there’s a rotting corpse on the premises. What’s surprising is that they ignore the body. Instead, one of them questions the traveller and searches his car with a menacing nonchalance.



This is Brazil in 1977, when the country was in the grip of a military dictatorship and, as the movie goes on to show, the notions of crime and punishment were severely warped: one incautious word to the wrong person was enough to send someone on the run.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/08/the-secret-agent-movie-review>

4. Tyler Mitchell: the photographer of the moment. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.  
EVERY YEAR the Aperture Foundation hosts a ritzy gala in New York to raise money and fete those it considers “leaders in the field” of photography. (It also publishes a magazine, likewise called Aperture, arguably the world’s most prestigious photography title.) The distinction tends to be given to artists to acknowledge decades of work: Graciela Iturbide won in 2021, aged 79, and Richard Misrach in 2024, aged 75.

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2025/12/04/tyler-mitchell-the-photographer-of-the-moment>

5. The 30-year-old dystopian novel that is the talk of TikTok. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.  
IT DOES NOT sound like the sort of book TikTok typically enjoys. “I Who Have Never Known Men” (“IWHNKM”) does not feature wolves, fairies or the word “rutting”. It is a desolate post-apocalyptic tale, not a racy coming-of-age story. Yet thanks to social media, the novel is a hit—30 years after it was first published.

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2025/12/01/the-30-year-old-dystopian-novel-that-is-the-talk-of-tiktok>

6. AI revolution and synthetic cinema. Frontline. Vol 42. No-22. 15th Dec 2025.  
There is a category error that most people make when engaging with something like the recently concluded Mumbai AI Film Festival (MAFF). On the one hand is our response to the people organising it: men and a woman in their early 20s, who prefer to be called “boys”, so I shall do that, not entirely out of an infantilising impulse. They have framed the film festival and AI—shrouded in a solutions-oriented tech lingo—as a democratising impulse, cutting through barriers, red tape, gatekeepers, and even, perhaps, a base desire for cinema. You can make cinema simply because you want to. Or, as someone at the festival noted: “You get drunk and make a movie! WHAAT?! That is how effortless it should be.” This is largely the rhetoric around the festival and around AI: to make filmmaking frictionless.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/columns/ai-cinema-revolution-film-festival/article70316720.ece>

7. A new map to Gaitonde. Frontline. Vol 42. No-22. 15th Dec 2025.  
“I wanted to explore sur, or melody, wherever it exists. How does one perceive sur in words? Does sur exist in colour?” Perhaps it would not be an exaggeration to say

that these words, extracted from an interview with Kishori Amonkar, hold the key to understanding the enigmatic and auratic paintings of Vasudeo Santu Gaitonde (November 2, 1924–August 10, 2001), where the sense of profound calm and play of colours remind viewers of the emotional depth of music. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that Amonkar was one of Gaitonde's favourite musicians.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/arts-and-culture/art/gaitonde-silent-colour-vision-indian-modernism/article70269998.ece>

8. Tyeb Mehta: A mirror to the split self. Frontline. Vol 42. No-22. 15th Dec 2025.  
My reflection on Tyeb Mehta intends to be a departure from the normative biographical or autobiographical modes. It is also careful to curve around the comforts of established art historical methods. The main preoccupation of this piece is the complex emotional responses that Tyeb's works elicit, rooted as they are in the folk, votive, and popular motifs that all of us engage with in our own daily lives. In short, my focus is on Tyeb Mehta's "affect".

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/arts-and-culture/art/tyeb-mehta-dialectic-violence-indian-art/article70211686.ece>

## BIOGRAPHY

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9. Tom Stoppard was an inexhaustible fountain of ideas. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.  
On a warm summer day in 2003, Tom Stoppard found himself strolling round the mostly ruined estate of Premukhino, north of Moscow. The graffiti-scrawled walls had once been home to the family of Mikhail Bakunin, a 19th-century Russian anarchist. This was his setting for the first act of "The Coast of Utopia", a trilogy about Russian thinkers, with its hero in Alexander Herzen. The play began with a family gathering: the women talking about Pushkin (then still alive) and affairs of the heart, the young men arguing about German philosophy and Russian literature. As he wandered he recognised a pond, where a visitor had caught a carp, and the site of a family bonfire party.

<https://www.economist.com/obituary/2025/12/03/tom-stoppard-was-an-inexhaustible-fountain-of-ideas>

10. Which Kevin Hassett would lead the Federal Reserve?. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.  
On paper, Kevin Hassett looks like a conventional pick. He has a phd in economics, several top-tier publications to his name, decades in Washington and even a previous stint at the Federal Reserve. But if President Donald Trump does choose Mr Hassett as the central bank's chair, an event to which prediction markets assign a more than 70% chance, his appointment would mark an abrupt shift in the relationship between the Fed and White House.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2025/12/03/which-kevin-hassett-would-lead-the-federal-reserve>

## BUSINESS

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11. From micro-dramas to video games, Chinese entertainment is booming. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

Artsy film critics are unlikely to be impressed by China's micro-dramas. Even so, the roughly two-minute episodes, which cram soap-opera plots into a short-video format, are wildly popular. Watched almost exclusively on mobile devices, viewers can scroll mindlessly through episodes as they would clips on TikTok. Revenue in China from micro-dramas is projected to nearly double this year, to 90bn yuan (\$12.7bn)—exceeding sales of cinema tickets. Chinese studios shot 40,000 of them in the first eight months of the year (a typical series has 90 episodes).

<https://www.economist.com/business/2025/12/03/from-micro-dramas-to-video-games-chinese-entertainment-is-booming>

12. China's unlikely new entertainment capital. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

Even among Westerners who have dabbled in Chinese micro-dramas, few will have heard of Zhengzhou, the sooty city at the heart of the industry. In recent years the drab inland manufacturing hub of 13m has mostly made the news for deadly floods, factory protests and the severity of its real-estate crisis. Yet it is now churning out shows that are being watched around the world.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2025/12/04/chinas-unlikely-new-entertainment-capital>

13. Even Europe's penmakers are under threat. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

Some SCHOOLS have resorted to banning them, to prevent distraction, peer pressure and outright theft. Not mobile phones, but Legami gel pens. Children across Europe love the Italian firm's colourful pens, with their animal heads and catchy slogans: "Bee Different"; "No Problama". They collect them, trade them—and sometimes pinch them.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2025/12/04/even-europes-penmakers-are-under-threat>

14. To halt their decline, VW and others are turning Chinese. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

FOREIGN carmakers doing business in China once avoided talk of "technology transfer". Their Faustian bargain with the country's government allowed them to access its vast car market in return for the know-how they transmitted through joint ventures. Now that the flow of technology has reversed, they use the phrase openly.



In a recent presentation on its business in China, executives from Volkswagen (VW) happily noted that it was “leveraging local partners for technology transfer”.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2025/12/04/to-halt-their-decline-vw-and-others-are-turning-chinese>

15. Patrick Drahi has bested his lenders yet again. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

After years of debt-fuelled expansion, Altice divided itself in three. Since 2018 the American arm of the telecoms empire has stood alone. Under a web of Luxembourg-based entities sit Altice France, which owns SFR, its country's second-largest operator, and Altice International, with businesses in Portugal, Israel and the Dominican Republic. Each part has struggled with a huge debt load while remaining under the control of a shareholder whose approach to debt is singularly ruthless: borrow as much as possible, then squeeze the lenders. Lately creditors have been wrung out even further.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2025/12/04/patrick-drahi-has-bested-his-lenders-yet-again>

16. How many hours should employees work?. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

Nine to five is still alive. Sort of. A new survey of labour-force data by Amory Gethin of the World Bank and Emmanuel Saez of the University of California, Berkeley finds that the world's employed adult population works an average of 42 hours a week. This number contains multitudes. Gender, age and levels of economic development affect how many hours people work. Many jobs are not neatly packaged into five eight-hour days. But the 40-hour week is still a norm.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2025/12/04/how-many-hours-should-employees-work>

## CLIMATE CHANGE

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17. South-East Asia and Sri Lanka are reeling from storms and flooding. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

Three simultaneous cyclones and an unusually intense monsoon have left a trail of destruction across southern Asia, extending from the South China Sea in the east to the Bay of Bengal in the west. Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand are all reeling from the effects. At least 1,600 people have perished and hundreds are still missing. Nearly 11m people have been affected and over a million displaced by continued flooding. Sri Lanka, which was still recovering from an economic collapse in 2022, has been particularly hard hit, with infrastructure and agriculture severely damaged. So has Indonesia, which accounts for nearly half the death toll. Cyclones such as the one that battered it are uncommon so close to the equator. That worsened the effects because locals had little experience of such extreme weather, according to the World Meteorological Organisation, a UN agency.

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2025/12/04/south-east-asia-and-sri-lanka-are-reeling-from-storms-and-flooding>

## CULTURE

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18. Why there is an Advent calendar for absolutely everything. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

ADVENT CALENDARS never used to be much fun. Each day in December, as part of the lead-up to Christmas, you would peel back a card door to reveal a Bible verse or a picture of a church bell. Only if your parents were cool would you get a chocolate calendar.

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2025/12/02/why-there-is-an-advent-calendar-for-absolutely-everything>

## ECONOMICS

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19. India's Growth Prospects. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol. 60. NO-49. 6th Dec 2025.

The annual staff report of the Article IV consultation between the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Government of India forewarns of less-than-optimal growth prospects for the Indian economy. It estimates that gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2025–26 will be 6.6%, just a decimal point higher than the estimate for 2024–25. It also forecasts that GDP growth will be only 2 to 4 decimal points above 6% in 2026–27 and 2027–28, and indicates that growth will fluctuate in the 6% to 7% range until the end of the decade.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/49/editorials/indias-growth-prospects.html>

20. The Gender Gap in Financial Well-being Measurement in India. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol. 60. NO-49. 6th Dec 2025.

The current approaches to measuring financial well-being in India fail to capture women's distinct financial realities. Existing measures overlook women's lived realities shaped by caregiving, limited autonomy, and structural inequalities. Drawing on literature and qualitative insights from the field study conducted with Indian women, this article calls for a gender-sensitive, contextually grounded framework of FWB that enables more precise assessment and informs inclusive policy interventions.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/49/commentary/gender-gap-financial-well-being-measurement-india.html>



21. Persistent Rural, Emergent 'Ruralities'. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol. 60. NO-49. 6th Dec 2025.

The village persists, in India as elsewhere in the world. The relative size of urban areas has indeed been growing, but there is no evidence of the "rural" shrinking or disappearing. In fact, the absolute size of the rural population is larger than ever before in human history. Except for a few pockets, the number of settlements designated as rural has not been declining either. In India, for example, the 2011 decadal census counted a total of 6,40,867 villages, compared to 6,38,588 a decade earlier. This is despite many of the growing rural settlements having been designated as "census towns."

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/49/review-rural-affairs/persistent-rural-emergent-ruralities.html>

22. China's Rise to Dominance. India Forum. 28th Nov 2025.

By far the most important geo-economic development of the first quarter of the 21st century has been the rise of China as a manufacturing, trading, and now technological power. In 25 short years, the country has increased its share of the global gross domestic product (GDP) to 17% from 4%. Over the same period, it has increased its share of world merchandise exports to 15% from 6%. China dominates global manufacturing activity even more, having overtaken the US as the world's leading manufacturer in 2010, and now enjoying a one-third share of the world total.

<https://www.theindiaforum.in/international-affairs/chinas-rise-dominance>

23. The Great Indian Poverty Debate. India Forum. 27th Nov 2025.

The epithet "the Great Indian Poverty Debate" dates back to the early 2000s, when the first version of the debate around India's poverty estimates was triggered by a lack of comparability of underlying survey data. The National Sample Survey (NSS) Organisation's Household Consumer Expenditure Survey (CES) has long served as India's premiere (monetary) poverty monitoring instrument and the primary data source for official poverty statistics. A change in the NSS survey methodology for the 55th round of the CES in 1999-00 led to a vigorous debate on how much poverty had declined up to that point. Many key contributions to this debate—which still make excellent reading—were collected in a volume titled *The Great Indian Poverty Debate* edited by Angus Deaton and Valerie Kozel (2005).

<https://www.theindiaforum.in/economy/great-indian-poverty-debate>

24. Oops! ... The World Bank did it Again. India Forum. India Forum. 26th Nov 2025.

Some eight and a half years ago the World Bank Commission on Global Poverty, presided by the late Sir Tony Atkinson, made 21 recommendations for improving upon the World Bank's method of measuring global poverty. The Commission had recommended not to change the poverty line until 2030, but the World Bank has updated the poverty line twice since; with the recent update for 2025 showing a

worrisome addition of 200 million people living in conditions of extreme poverty. This gap is second only to the 2005 update of the international poverty line which resulted in a jump by 400 million people. This is not an unexpected turnout, but a problem bound to occur based on the conceptual core of the World Bank's approach. The World Bank's partial acceptance of the recommendations of the Commission on Global Poverty indicates that the measurement of global poverty appears to be a domain where institutional inertia and pristine methodological recommendations tend to clash.

<https://www.theindiaforum.in/economy/oops-world-bank-did-it-again>

25. Larry Fink and Rob Goldstein on how tokenisation could transform finance. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

Fifty years ago money moved at the speed of mail. When one of us (Larry) started his career in 1976, trades were placed over the phone and settled with paper certificates sent by courier. In 1977 a technology called swift brought standardised electronic messaging between banks, cutting transaction times from days to minutes. Today, trades between New York and London execute in milliseconds.

<https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2025/12/01/larry-fink-and-rob-goldstein-on-how-tokenisation-could-transform-finance>

26. Russia's dodgy plan for a pipeline in Congo. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

FOR MORE than four decades the Republic of Congo, a central-African country of 6m people, has had only a single oil refinery, despite being a major producer of crude oil. That looks set to change by the end of December, when a new Chinese-built refinery is expected to start operations near the port city of Pointe-Noire. The refinery may reduce the petrostate's reliance on expensive, imported, refined oil. But it will not solve the problem of getting the stuff to Brazzaville, the capital some 500km inland, without a long and bumpy journey by road.

<https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2025/12/04/russias-dodgy-plan-for-a-pipeline-in-congo>

27. Why worries about American job losses are overstated. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

Everyone is gloomy about America's jobs market. Investors talk of a "K-shaped" economy, in which growth is buoyed by an exuberant stockmarket and artificial-intelligence investment, while ordinary Americans languish. Job creation and overall economic growth, which usually move in tandem, have diverged. The Federal Reserve has cut interest rates at its two most recent meetings. Jerome Powell, the central bank's chair, calls the loosening "risk management", or insurance against a deeper downturn. Christopher Waller, a contender to replace Mr Powell, is pushing for further and faster cuts, beginning at the next meeting on December 10th, to support a weakening labour market.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2025/11/30/why-worries-about-american-job-losses-are-overstated>

**28. How to spot a bubble bursting. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.**

Ray Dalio spied the dotcom bubble early. “We’re approaching a blow-off phase of the US stockmarket,” said the founder of Bridgewater, one of the world’s biggest hedge funds. Peter Lynch, the celebrated manager of Fidelity’s Magellan fund, thought “not enough investors are worried”. Howard Marks, a pioneering investor in junk bonds, very much was worried, since “every cocktail-party guest and cab driver just wants to talk about hot stocks and funds.” George Soros put his neck on the line and short-sold internet stocks outright. Warren Buffett refused to touch them, saying he could not “see what technology businesses will look like in ten years or who the market leaders will be”.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2025/12/01/how-to-spot-a-bubble-bursting>

**29. Bitcoin has plunged. Strategy Inc is an early victim. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.**

STRATEGY, once a middling software firm named MicroStrategy, is now best known as the world’s largest corporate owner of bitcoin. Michael Saylor, its founder, describes the company as the world’s first digital-credit vehicle, powered by what he calls “a bitcoin reactor”. Now, with the price of the cryptocurrency plummeting, it is something else altogether: an example of hubris, demonstrating the risks of taking on leverage to purchase enormous quantities of a volatile asset.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2025/12/04/bitcoin-has-plunged-strategy-inc-is-an-early-victim>

**30. Can golden toilets fix China’s economy?. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.**

One of the main attractions of Deji Plaza, a shopping centre in Nanjing, is its toilets. An artsy wing of the mall features absurd lavatories over six stories. On level three they are decked out in mesmerising neon lights; two floors up they boast sparkling gold designs and a grand piano. Visitors travel for hours to see the extravagance. And they are not just running to the restrooms. Deji was the highest-grossing mall in China last year, with 25bn yuan (\$3.5bn) in sales. By some counts, it was the highest-grossing in the world.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2025/12/04/can-golden-toilets-fix-chinas-economy>

**31. American sanctions are putting Russia under pressure. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.**

On December 1st Gunvor, a big oil trader, announced that its co-founder and boss, Torbjorn Tornqvist, would leave and sell his stake in the firm to staff. The Swede is a collateral victim of American sanctions against Lukoil and Rosneft, Russia’s biggest oil firms, that were implemented on November 21st. Swiss-based Gunvor



had offered to buy Lukoil's \$22bn portfolio of foreign plants, stations and wells, reviving suspicions it was cosy with the Kremlin. America blocked the sale, forcing it into a humiliating u-turn. Now Lukoil's assets look like they may be sold in chunks, for rather less money.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2025/12/04/american-sanctions-are-putting-russia-under-pressure>

32. Stockholm is Europe's new capital of capital. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

Ask a European banker how to reinvigorate their continent's capital markets, and there is a good chance they will start enthusing about Sweden. That might seem surprising, since during the post-Brexit scramble to replace London as Europe's premier financial centre, Stockholm barely got a look-in. Frankfurt, home to the euro zone's central bank, seemed the obvious choice; its competition came from Paris's mighty commercial banks. Honourable mention went to Amsterdam, reprising its 17th-century role as a share-trading hub.

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2025/12/03/stockholm-is-europes-new-capital-of-capital>

33. Profit over public interest. Frontline. Vol 42. No-22. 15th Dec 2025.

The Union government seems set to launch a new round of banking policy liberalisation. Among the pointers is a recent statement made by the Finance Minister that "India needs a lot of big, world-class banks" and that a strategy to ensure that is being discussed.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/columns/india-banking-liberalisation/article70316565.ece>

34. Africa needs to generate more electricity. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

To get a sense of how little electricity people use in sub-Saharan Africa, imagine each person there turning on a single 50-watt light bulb. That alone would instantly double electricity consumption. Nigeria, with 240m people, generates less electricity than the American state of Wyoming, which has 0.6m inhabitants. Uganda, with 50m people, produces less than Latvia, which has a population of 1.9m. Around 600m Africans have no electricity at all. Without more power, the continent will never grow rich.

<https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2025/12/04/africa-needs-to-generate-more-electricity>

## EDUCATION

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35. The Plot against Jim Ryan. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol.72. No-7. 28th Nov 2025.

James E. Ryan had four hours.

Having led the University of Virginia for nearly seven years as its president, it all came down to this: walk away from the job, acceding to political pressure, or risk inviting hellfire on the university he loved. For the then-58-year-old administrator the choice was excruciating. And time was running out.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-plot-against-jim-ryan>

36. 'Universities Have Become Isolated and Arrogant'. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol.72. No-7. 28th Nov 2025.

No longer a college president, E. Gordon Gee isn't taking off his bow tie just yet. Within minutes of connecting over Zoom, he ticked off his various ventures: a residency at the Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society at Ohio State University; an adviser to the leadership of the start-up University of Austin; a fellow at the University Design Institute at Arizona State University; and a strategic fixer at the Washington law firm Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck. (Looking to navigate the fraught complexities of Trump's Washington? Gee can be your guide, for a fee.)

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/universities-have-become-isolated-and-arrogant>

37. The Colorado Paradox. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol.72. No-7. 28th Nov 2025.

Colorado has a distinct vibe: dynamic, attractive, youthful, and adventurous. Amid a sea of Western red states, it has earned a reputation as politically progressive but also pragmatically business friendly, a place that has found a balance between the conservative Rocky Mountain libertarian and the pot-smoking urban libertine.

<https://www.chronicle.com/special-projects/the-different-voices-of-student-success/reducing-structural-barriers/the-colorado-paradox>

38. 'I Don't Feel Safe in This Classroom'. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol.72. No-7. 28th Nov 2025.

After taking a social-work course at Colorado State University in 2023, one student had striking words to share in a course evaluation: "I don't feel safe in this classroom," they wrote, adding that "judgment and rejection" came from the two instructors. "This makes me shut down."

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/i-dont-feel-safe-in-this-classroom>

39. An Instructor Showed a Graphic on White Supremacy. Did She Break the Law?. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol.72. No-7. 28th Nov 2025.

In late September, Jessica Adams, an instructor in Indiana University's School of Social Work, showed a slide to her class that listed acts of "white supremacy" in the form of a pyramid. At the tip of the pyramid were "overt," socially unacceptable acts, like "hate crimes" and "swastikas." Below that were "covert," socially acceptable

acts, like the phrase “Make America Great Again” and the celebration of Columbus Day.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/an-instructor-showed-a-graphic-on-white-supremacy-did-she-break-the-law>

40. A ‘Steep Decline’ in Students’ Academic Preparation at UC-San Diego Struck a Nerve. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol.72. No-7. 28th Nov 2025.

A blunt new report from the University of California at San Diego has ignited a fierce debate about declining student readiness and what that says about the state of higher education. The report, compiled by an internal faculty group, painted a grim picture of the math and writing skills of the first-year class at UC-San Diego, among the nation’s

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/people-are-freaking-out-over-the-steep-decline-in-students-academic-preparation-at-uc-san-diego>

41. Texas A&M System Sharply Restricts How Faculty Can Teach About Race and Gender. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol.72. No-7. 28th Nov 2025.

The Texas A&M University system’s board voted unanimously Thursday to ban courses that advocate for “race or gender ideology, or topics related to sexual orientation or gender identity,” unless faculty members have prior approval from their campus president.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/texas-a-m-system-sharply-restricts-how-faculty-can-teach-about-race-and-gender>

42. Secret Rules Now Govern What Can Be Taught in Florida. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol.72. No-7. 28th Nov 2025.

“It’s only three or four words.”

That was one woefully insufficient rationale offered by administrators here at the University of North Florida after faculty members like myself were told to alter our course materials to remove four specific terms (“diversity,” “equity,” “inclusion,” and “culture”) that far-right state policymakers had recently deemed inappropriate. “It’s the law and we must follow the law” was another.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/secret-rules-now-govern-what-can-be-taught-in-florida>

43. The Decline of the Great American Research University. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol.72. No-7. 28th Nov 2025.

American universities are heading downwards in a spiral of self-delusion. They still talk about their commitment to excellence, their great achievements, their leadership of the world of science, but they lament the damage that President Trump has inflicted, is inflicting, or is about to inflict on them. As Harvard President Alan M. Garber wrote in



<https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-decline-of-the-great-american-research-university>

44. How Did We Get So Cynical About Higher Ed?. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol.72. No-7. 28th Nov 2025.

In a recent poll, the Pew Research Center found that “seven in 10 Americans now say the higher-education system in the United States is generally going in the wrong direction.” The finding confirms what most who work in higher education already know: There is an urgent need to restore the public’s trust in colleges and universities. Already, there has been a lot of talk about how this renewal of the public trust might be accomplished, but although there is a universe of potential reforms, two conservative-led efforts have been underway for years.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/how-did-we-get-so-cynical-about-higher-ed>

45. How to Thrive as an Adjunct Professor. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol.72. No-7. 28th Nov 2025.

When I started teaching as an adjunct more than a decade ago, I felt as though my wish to become a college professor had been granted, but I hadn’t worded the wish carefully enough. Apparently, when I had talked about my dream of teaching in higher ed, I had not specified — to the unseen academic gods listening in — that as part of this dream/wish I also wanted semester-to-semester job security and full-time benefits, including health care.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/how-to-thrive-as-an-adjunct-professor>

46. A Conservative Student Got a Zero on Her Paper about Gender. Did She Deserve It?. Chronicle of Higher Education. Vol.72. No-7. 28th Nov 2025.

Did a student paper arguing for traditional gender roles and identities deserve its failing grade? Or was that mark proof of political bias, and of academe’s hostility to religious conservatives? That debate is unspooling at the University of Oklahoma. There, Samantha Fulnecky was recently asked in a psychology course to respond to an academic article. In her short reaction paper, Fulnecky wrote that while the article “discussed peers using teasing as a way to enforce gender norms,” she did “not necessarily see this as a problem,” according to

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/a-conservative-student-got-a-zero-on-her-paper-about-gender-did-she-deserve-it>

47. Postdoctoral fellows in HEIs: importance, implications and way forward. University News. Vol.63. No-48. 1-7 Dec 2025. Page No. 3-5.

Post- doctoral fellows constitute an important segment of the University Research Ecosystem. In the words of Balram (current science, 1999), together with PhD students, postdoctoral fellows are the backbone of the scientific enterprise. They

are, indeed, foot soldiers of science. Postdocs represent an intermediate stage/step between academic staff/ independent research faculty and the research students.

48. Compliance to capacity building: improving organizational health in Indian Universities. University News. Vol.63. No-48. 1-7 Dec 2025. Page No. 6-11.

The organizational health of Indian universities is shaped by the complex interplay of regulatory frameworks, governance practices, faculty capacity, and research ecosystem. While the expansion of higher education has significantly increased access, quality concerns persist because of underfunding, fragmented regulation, faculty shortages, bureaucratic inefficiencies.

49. Enterprise risk management in higher Education system is now a must: how to go about? . University News. Vol.63. No-48. 1-7 Dec 2025. Page No. 12-17.

Globally, higher education has become more complex than ever before. For example, issues from the creation and building of institutions to accommodate the swelling number of students, their admission and campus life, faculty recruitment and retention, funding and fund management, to growing pressure of compliance, including accreditation and rankings, precisely tell the huge areas of responsibilities that the institutions have to face.

50. Capacity building for teachers: strategies, challenges, and implications for quality education. University News. Vol.63. No-48. 1-7 Dec 2025. Page No. 18-19.

Teacher capacity building has become a central focus in global educational reform efforts, as high-quality teaching correlated with improved student learning outcomes. Capacity building goes beyond initial teacher training and involves sustained professional learning, collaborative inquiry.

Women entrepreneurship in India: strategic roadmap for skill-based empowerment with special emphasis on village-level enterprises. University News. Vol.63. No-48. 1-7 Dec 2025. Page No. 20-22.

In India women entrepreneurship has emerged as a significant driver of economic growth, employment generation, and social transformation. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is an era of numerous entrepreneurship policy interventions such as the “Survival of a Girl to her journey in becoming an entrepreneur” initiative- and a range of government programs, and women, particularly in rural and village communities, continue to grow despite formidable barriers.

51. Mormonism’s surprising boom in Africa. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

Two decades ago Sampson Boamah did something unusual for a Ghanaian high-school student: he became a Mormon. Back then the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as the American Christian sect is formally known, was on the fringes in Africa. Many viewed it as “the white people’s church”. On his first mission in Nigeria, Mr Boamah encountered a woman who had been told that Mormons turned into goats at night. In Ghana it was rumoured they drank blood.

<https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2025/12/01/mormonisms-surprising-boom-in-africa>

## EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

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52. How AI is rewiring childhood. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS may contain more surprises than usual this year, as children open presents that can talk back. Toymakers in China have declared 2025 the year of artificial intelligence (AI) and are producing robots and teddies that can teach, play and tell stories. Older children, meanwhile, are glued to viral AI videos and AI-enhanced games. At school, many are being taught with materials created with tools like ChatGPT. Some are even learning alongside chatbot-tutors.

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2025/12/04/how-ai-is-rewiring-childhood>

53. At home and at school, AI is transforming childhood. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

TEACHERS WERE baffled. Some of the children using Khan Academy, an online learning platform, seemed to be cheating at their math assignments with the help of an unknown accomplice. An investigation eventually unmasked the culprit: Pythagoras, an ancient Greek mathematician with a penchant for right-angled triangles. As a study aid, Khan Academy allows pupils to chat with AI simulations of towering intellects of the past. Children had discovered that with some gentle prompting, the digital Pythagoras was happy to complete their homework.

<https://www.economist.com/briefing/2025/12/04/at-home-and-at-school-ai-is-transforming-childhood>

54. Lessons from the frontiers of AI adoption. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

It is becoming ever more common for bosses to talk up their artificial-intelligence efforts while wielding the axe. Last month Enrique Lores, chief executive of hP, said that the computer manufacturer would cut around 5,000 jobs within three years as it embeds “AI in everything we do”. The same day Marguerite Bérard, boss of ABN Amro, a Dutch bank, unveiled sweeping lay-offs of her own, declaring that her company was “embracing AI to improve client services and reduce costs”. According to Challenger, Gray & Christmas, an employment firm, AI was cited as a cause in a fifth of the lay-offs announced by American companies in October.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2025/12/01/lessons-from-the-frontiers-of-ai-adoption>

## ENVIRONMENT

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55. Recall of the Vanashakti Judgment. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol. 60. N0-49. 6th Dec 2025.



On 16 May 2025, in a landmark judgment in *Vanashakti v Union of India*, a two-judge bench of the Supreme Court of India struck down a 2017 notification and a 2021 office memorandum that had permitted retrospective (ex post facto) environmental clearances. Six months later, on 18 November 2025, the Court recalled this judgment following a review petition filed by the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI).

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/49/comment/recall-vanashakti-judgment.html>

## HEALTH

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**56. The Undermining of the C.D.C. New Yorker. 8th December 2025.**

Two weeks ago, by inserting what must be the most notorious asterisk in modern public health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention caveated its long-standing position that vaccines do not cause autism. Under the direction of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., the Secretary of Health and Human Services, a C.D.C. web page now contends that this is “not an evidence-based claim” and that research linking vaccines to autism has been “ignored by health authorities.” The fact that the original statement remains at all is due to an agreement with Senator Bill Cassidy, a physician and the chair of the Senate health committee, who disregarded decades of Kennedy’s vaccine skepticism to advance his confirmation after extracting a set of flimsy commitments that Kennedy is now betraying. The Autism Science Foundation said that it is “appalled” by the C.D.C.’s new stance; the American Medical Association warned of “dangerous consequences.”

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/08/the-undermining-of-the-cdc>

**57. India Needs More Data on Anaemia, Not Less. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol. 60. NO-49. 6th Dec 2025.**

The decision to drop haemoglobin measurement from the planned National Family Health Survey-6 is premised on the flawed argument that the capillary blood haemoglobin measurements overestimate the prevalence of anaemia. As long as the extent and direction of any discrepancy between capillary versus venous blood haemoglobin measurements are known, a reasonable estimate of the prevalence of the disease can be arrived at, as is done with many screening and diagnostic tests. Anaemia continues to be a major public health problem; a break with past practice will create a barrier in assessing the effectiveness of health programmes or planning future evidence-based strategies.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/49/commentary/india-needs-more-data-anaemia-not-less.html>

**58. Rethinking the Well-being of the Elderly Population in India. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol. 60. NO-49. 6th Dec 2025.**

Approaches to care among the elderly population have focused on “diseases,” neglecting their social, mental and spiritual aspects of health and well-being. There is a need to bring compassion, respect, and competence in providing care to the elderly. This could be achieved by focusing on different dimensions of well-being and accentuating the core values of the gerontological care approach in India.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/49/commentary/rethinking-well-being-elderly-population-india.html>

59. Does taping your mouth while you sleep have benefits?. Economist. 6th Dec 2025. Taping your mouth shut while sleeping might not sound appealing. But its proponents claim a vast array of benefits, from alleviating respiratory conditions to better-smelling breath and even a more chiselled jawline.

<https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2025/11/28/does-taping-your-mouth-while-you-sleep-have-benefits>

## HISTORY

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60. Rajat Kanta Ray (1946–2025). Economic & Political Weekly. Vol. 60. NO-49. 6th Dec 2025.

An obituary is anecdotal, loosely based on certain direct moments and their impacts, both immediate and long-term, for the one who recollects. Like many, my memory of Rajat Kanta Ray is immediate as one of his students, and long-term in my later academic pursuits. Without exception, attending Ray’s lectures in Presidency College was, for many, the major driving force to remain in academia. Now, writing something like an obituary of an academician par excellence, whose body of work is a constant source of intellectual sustenance, cannot be confined to personal moments within or outside the classroom but to highlight the scholarship and legacies he created and endured.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/49/commentary/rajat-kanta-ray-1946-2025.html>

61. How did the Habsburg Empire Survive?. History Today. Vol.75. No-12. Dec 2025.

After the Habsburg monarchy collapsed in the last months of 1918, historians were quick to write it off (like its Ottoman neighbour) as an anachronism long doomed to extinction for its reliance on dynastic authority as a basic principle of rule. While that monarchy existed, most of its subjects would have been surprised, perhaps offended, by their verdict. The Habsburg lands, loosely known as Austria, were not an unusual polity in earlier centuries, especially when consolidated in the 1740s-80s by a bout of effective state-building under two famous sovereigns, the ‘enlightened absolutists’ (as they have been termed) Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II. Badly shaken soon thereafter by the challenge from revolutionary France, Austria’s deteriorating internal situation nevertheless only became generally

apparent in the upheavals of 1848, as national grievances were conjoined to social ones and threatened to undermine a congeries of territories and peoples which lacked any ethnic group with more than a slim relative majority.

<https://www.historytoday.com/archive/head-head/how-did-habsburg-empire-survive>

62. Strabo: The First Geographer. History Today. Vol.75. No-12. Dec 2025.

Strabo of Amasia (c.63 BC-AD 24) holds the distinction of having written the first extant descriptive geography in the Western world. We might term him ‘the first geographer’, though in his opinion this term would be much too narrow to encompass his many talents. He saw himself as both a historian and philosopher whose magnum opus, the sprawling 17-book *Geography*, made sense of both the past and the present. The book, written in Greek, covers the entirety of the known world in the first century AD, describing the land and culture as well as the history of each region. Strabo’s aim in undertaking this monumental task was very clear. At the beginning of his work he claims that his words are essential reading for those interested in ‘political affairs and in matters that concern leaders’, and especially for anyone interested in imperial expansion:

<https://www.historytoday.com/archive/history-matters/strabo-first-geographer>

63. Hortense Mancini’s English Affairs. . History Today. Vol.75. No-12. Dec 2025.

Hortense Mancini arrived in London in December 1675 and caused a diplomatic crisis. Famous across Europe as the heiress of Cardinal Mazarin and as the duchess who had fled her abusive husband, Mancini came to England to take up sanctuary tendered to her by Charles II. By all accounts, she was treated as a celebrity refugee. Her arrival prompted curious crowds to mass wherever she stayed. Yet it was not her status as an asylum seeker that unsettled the political elite. Rather, her beauty and charm worried the king’s French mistress, Louise de K roualle, and the French ambassadors who had worked tirelessly to install K roualle as their puppet. When Mancini did – as expected – draw the attention of the king and supplant K roualle, the French envoys panicked and the French monarch, Louis XIV, repeatedly sacked and appointed a succession of ambassadorial replacements to rescue the situation. Some 18 months later the crisis resolved itself when Mancini embarked on an affair with the prince of Monaco, humiliating Charles and ending her tenure as official royal mistress.

<https://www.historytoday.com/archive/feature/hortense-mancinis-english-affairs>

64. The Problem with Britain’s Pensions. History Today. Vol.75. No-12. Dec 2025.

In May 2025 Keir Starmer, a prime minister with one of the largest majorities in history, backtracked on proposals to means-test the winter fuel allowance which has been paid to pensioners every year since 1997. There was a good case for the reform. Public finances are strained and, in the absence of rapid economic growth or tax hikes on working-age people, the government needed to make cuts



somewhere. Surely some of the best-off people in society, when incomes are adjusted for housing costs, could accept the government did not need to contribute to their heating bills? Yet pensioners – almost 20 per cent of the population – as well as a majority of the general public, according to YouGov polling, would not. British politics seems incapable of confronting one of its biggest challenges. Such concerns are nothing new. Financing old age has been the most significant problem for the welfare state since its inception.

<https://www.historytoday.com/archive/behind-times/problem-britains-pensions>

65. The Secret to Successful Medieval Movies. History Today. Vol.75. No-12. Dec 2025. Against my better judgement, I was persuaded to try *King and Conqueror* (BBC One). The period covered – the run-up to the Norman Conquest – is much better documented in contemporary narrative sources than any earlier stage in English history. The detailed stories of the reigns of Edward the Confessor and his doomed successor Harold II are replete with political drama of the highest order. But the details are not always compatible: there is still no agreement among historians about much of what was going on. The tensions, contradictions, and gaps left plenty of scope for scriptwriters to develop plausible plot lines. They could not have asked for more suggestive material.

<https://www.historytoday.com/archive/making-history/secret-successful-medieval-movies>

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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66. Enough dithering. Europe must pay to save Ukraine. Economist. 6th Dec 2025. EUROPE is breathing a sigh of relief. On December 2nd Donald Trump's envoy, Steve Witkoff, held lengthy talks about Ukraine with Vladimir Putin in Moscow—and not much happened. Many had been expecting Team Trump to sell out Ukrainian sovereignty in return for commercial deals. The risk of such an odious stitch-up now seems to have receded a bit. Thanks to pressure from European leaders and some sensible Republicans, including the secretary of state, Marco Rubio, some of the worst elements of a 28-point plan hatched by Mr Witkoff and his Kremlin chum, Kirill Dmitriev, have quietly been dropped. Mr Putin seems unenthusiastic about the current version. Mr Trump now says the whole thing is “a mess”. Diplomacy, like the war, will grind on.

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2025/12/03/enough-dithering-europe-must-pay-to-save-ukraine>

67. Syria's transition has gone better than expected. Economist. 6th Dec 2025. FROM the start of Syria's revolution in 2011 the regime said the country faced a choice: Assad or chaos. The dynasty that had ruled since 1971 warned that Syria would collapse without its iron grip. This was always a lie. It was Bashar al-Assad's

refusal to stand down, and his murder and torture of peaceful protesters, that plunged Syria into civil war.

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2025/12/04/syrias-transition-has-gone-better-than-expected>

68. Donald Trump looms over Vladimir Putin's visit to India. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

ON DECEMBER 4th, as The Economist went to press, Vladimir Putin was due to touch down in Delhi for the 23rd instalment of the India-Russia summit, an annual affair with many manly hugs and lots of bonhomie. This is Mr Putin's first visit to India since he launched his war in Ukraine in 2022. He will be feted with full pomp: a private dinner at the official residence of Narendra Modi, India's prime minister; a day full of summitry; a state dinner at the president's home; and a visit to the memorial of Mahatma Gandhi, perhaps the world's greatest advocate of non-violence.

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2025/12/04/donald-trump-looms-over-vladimir-putins-visit-to-india>

69. Lessons from Japan's efforts to wean itself off Chinese rare earths. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

WHEN JAPAN and China feuded over a set of disputed islands in 2010, China deployed a novel weapon. It imposed an unofficial ban on exports of rare earths, minerals used in everything from cars to missiles. Such economic coercion has since become commonplace. China used tough new controls on rare earths to force America to back down in its trade war this year.

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2025/12/04/lessons-from-japans-efforts-to-wean-itself-off-chinese-rare-earths>

70. Will Congress rein in Pete Hegseth and his boat-bombing campaign?. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

It was a scandal waiting to happen, and now it has. For over three months America's armed forces have conducted a relentless air campaign against suspected drug-smuggling boats in the Caribbean and Pacific. To date, they have carried out 21 confirmed strikes, which have killed at least 83 people, many of them apparently civilian smugglers. There has been little to no legal oversight. A meek Republican majority in Congress appeared content to abdicate its war powers to an imperial presidency.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2025/12/03/will-congress-rein-in-pete-hegseth-and-his-boat-bombing-campaign>

71. Brazil is embracing its African roots. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

November is marked by offerings of marigolds to the dead in Mexico, minutes of silence to honour fallen soldiers in Britain and turkey feasts to give thanks in the

United States. In Brazil it used to be just another month. Not any more: since last year Brazilians have turned it into “Black Consciousness Month”, its festivities reaching a peak with a new federal public holiday on November 20th.

<https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2025/11/24/brazil-is-embracing-its-african-roots>

72. America's peace initiative has stalled in Moscow. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

AFTER A FORTNIGHT of American diplomacy dialled up expectations of a peace deal, Vladimir Putin dialled them down on December 2nd with an evasive da-but-nyet. Russia's ruler kept Steve Witkoff, Donald Trump's envoy, and Jared Kushner, his powerful son-in-law, waiting for two and a half hours in Moscow. Mr Putin was busy delivering a hawkish speech to a hall of investment bankers, declaring his readiness to take on a war with Europe. When he deigned to meet the Americans, it was for five hours of detail-free talks focused on the “essence” of Russia's position, according to Yury Ushakov, a presidential adviser. The two sides were no “further from peace”, he insisted. An observer might say they were no closer.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2025/12/04/americas-peace-initiative-has-stalled-in-moscow>

73. The Hague is coping with the decline of international courts. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

THE COURTROOM where Slobodan Milosevic, the late Serbian leader, once stood trial for genocide was hardly ornate, but it had a certain bureaucratic authority. In September it closed for the last time. Remaining hearings, the presiding judge announced, would be held in a “modified conference room”. The downgrade was emblematic of the declining prestige of international criminal justice, and thus of The Hague, a city synonymous with punishing war crimes.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2025/12/04/the-hague-is-coping-with-the-decline-of-international-courts>

74. Why a small corruption scandal is a big problem for the EU. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

On the same day American diplomats sat down with Vladimir Putin in Moscow to discuss matters of war and peace in Europe, their European counterparts sat down—not entirely voluntarily—for a chat with Belgian police investigators. Oh dear. It was humiliating enough to have been excluded from a five-hour summit between the Russian president and Trumpian envoys on how to end the war in Ukraine; Europe has not thus far managed to convince either America or Russia that it matters enough to be invited to such confabs. But for diplomats in Brussels to be subjected on December 2nd to a police raid on their offices was the icing on the cake. Two Brussels foreign-policy grandees were detained by police, then formally designated as suspects. Federica Mogherini was once the European Union's foreign-policy chief. Stefano Sannino is one of the European Commission's most senior officials. Besides



denting the EU's credibility, the allegations of corruption threaten to morph into a serious crisis.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2025/12/04/why-a-small-corruption-scandal-is-a-big-problem-for-the-eu>

75. Our interview with Sir Keir Starmer. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

Labour politicians are not supposed to have a high opinion of their Conservative rivals. "Lower than vermin", was the judgment of Nye Bevan, a post-war Labour minister. But in an interview with The Economist on December 3rd Sir Keir Starmer, the prime minister, admitted something striking should Labour lose power: "If there is a Conservative government, I can sleep at night." A right-wing populist Reform UK government, however, "is a different proposition".

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2025/12/04/our-interview-with-sir-keir-starmer>

## LAW

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76. Italy's populist right stalls a sexual-consent law. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

ITALY HAS been seen as a land of suave seducers since the days of Casanova. In the post-MeToo era that image is less attractive, but rebranding is not proving easy. In mid-November the lower house of Italy's parliament unanimously passed a law requiring explicit consent to engage in sex, which would bring it in line with much of the rest of Europe. But the populist-right League party has since withdrawn its support, meaning more hearings and possible revisions in the Senate.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2025/12/04/italys-populist-right-stalls-a-sexual-consent-law>

77. Britain's plan to curb jury trials is a sharp break with tradition. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

Walk around the Old Bailey, Britain's most famous criminal court, and you will find a marble plaque. It commemorates a trial from 1670, when a jury refused to convict two Quakers of unlawful assembly, despite pressure from a judge and being locked up without food or water. Their stubbornness helped establish, the plaque says, "the right of juries to give their verdict according to their convictions".

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2025/12/04/britains-plan-to-curb-jury-trials-is-a-sharp-break-with-tradition>

## LITERATURE

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78. Silber, Joan

Safety. New Yorker. 8th December 2025.

Dictators like to move people around. Stalin, for instance. From the summer of 1941 through the fall of 1942, with the Russian front facing massive bombardment and Nazi troops on the ground, he decided to relocate civilians, and entire industries, to safer regions in the eastern Soviet Union. The Urals, Siberia, the middle Volga, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan eventually received sixteen million evacuees, perhaps the most ever moved across land by a single directive.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/08/safety-fiction-joan-silber>

Olds, Sharon

79. Tornado Imagined from Far Away. New Yorker. 8th December 2025.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/08/tornado-imagined-from-far-away-sharon-olds-poem>

80. And The Economist's word of the year for 2025 is. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

PICKING A WORD of the year is not easy. In the past the American Dialect Society has gone with "tender-age shelters" (2018) and "-ussy" (2022). The Oxford English Dictionary (oed) has caused conniptions by opting for things like "youthquake" (2017) and "goblin mode" (2022). If you cannot remember why those terms were big that year that is the point: the exercise is not a straightforward one.

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2025/12/03/and-the-economists-word-of-the-year-for-2025-is>

## MILITARY SCIENCE

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81. India's defence-tech startups are thriving. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

ANIRUDH SHARMA was a computer-science undergraduate with no training in aerospace when he co-founded Digantara, which gathers intelligence on satellite movements, in 2020. Today it employs 150 people in India, Singapore and America and is valued at more than \$65m. That may be a modest sum by Western standards. But it makes Digantara one of the big success stories in India's flourishing defence-and-aerospace startup scene.

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2025/12/03/indias-defence-tech-startups-are-thriving>

82. Europe is going on a huge military spending spree. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

European governments face a defence crunch, caught between Russian aggression and American unreliability. But they are starting to take the threat seriously. In May the European Commission launched safe (Security Action for Europe), a €150bn

(\$174bn) fund that gives eu members low-interest loans for defence investments. It provides money to tackle Europe's most glaring capability gaps and to boost industrial capacity through common procurement. Sceptics doubted there would be many takers. But when the deadline passed on November 30th, 19 countries had applied and the fund was fully subscribed. Poland alone wants €43.7bn.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2025/12/01/europe-is-going-on-a-huge-military-spending-spree>

83. Western armed forces have struggled to fill their ranks to deter Russia. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

"WE NEED TO mobilise," Emmanuel Macron, the president of France, said on November 27th as he introduced a new scheme for voluntary service in the armed forces almost three decades after France phased out conscription in the 1990s. "The only way to avoid danger is to prepare for it."

<https://www.economist.com/international/2025/12/04/western-armed-forces-have-struggled-to-fill-their-ranks-to-deter-russia>

## POLITICAL SCIENCE & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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84. Mamdani Family Values. New Yorker. 8th December 2025.

On a recent Thursday, the eve of Zohran Mamdani's first meeting with President Donald Trump, the Mayor-elect stopped by a reading at Book Culture, near Columbia University. The subject of the book was dictators. The author: his dad, Mahmood Mamdani, a leading scholar in the field of post-colonial studies. The elder Mamdani, who wore a maroon scarf looped over a dark blazer, was describing his firsthand experience with authoritarian rule, in Uganda. "Power corrupts, to different degrees," he said, drawing laughs from the crowd of about eighty. "You have to be on your watch, every minute and every second." Heads tilted toward the younger Mamdani, who sat on a folding chair in the front row, suited and smiling. "That's a good place to end it," the moderator suggested. "With a little warning to the room." The politician, who had an early flight to D.C. in the morning, greeted a handful of well-wishers, then slipped out quietly.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/08/mamdani-family-values>

85. Tartuffe Times Two. New Yorker. 8th December 2025.

Good afternoon and welcome to Con Con, the convention for swindlers, mountebanks, and the people who love them. Joining us today are two actors, André De Shields and Matthew Broderick, who, in separate productions, have recently played or are just about to play Tartuffe, the falsely pious scam artist at the heart of Molière's 1664 comedy of the same name. Today's Con Con session is being held in the conference room of the Greenwich House Music School, which conveniently



has a patio, should the two conventioners' theatrical rivalry give way to name-calling and bitch-slapping.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/08/tartuffe-times-two>

86. From 25 Years Ago: Family Planning Programme: Paradigm Shift in Strategy. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol. 60. NO-49. 6th Dec 2025.

Over the last decade it has come to be accepted, albeit grudgingly, that the colossal family planning programme in India, arguably one of the largest public health initiatives in the world, has been a failure. Partly due to this realisation, partly as a result of pressures generated by women's groups and health groups calling for a radical reconsideration of the programme's goals and objectives, and partly in preparation for the third decennial International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994, the government of India initiated the search for a new direction to population policy. At the ICPD itself, a new approach to population policy was advocated in the Plan of Action, which was not demographically driven but instead emphasised, on the one hand, the empowerment of women and, on the other, an approach of reproductive health care [ICPD 1994]. The World Bank, whose commanding role in the health sector has reached an apogee, not perhaps coincidentally, brought out a document entitled *India's Family Welfare Programme: Towards a Reproductive and Child Health Approach* in June 1995 [World Bank 1995].

<https://www.epw.in/journal/25-years-ago/25-years-ago-family-planning-programme-paradigm.html>

87. From 50 Years Ago: India and the Colonial Mode of Production: Comment. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol. 60. NO-49. 6th Dec 2025.

A critique of Hamza Alavi's article is rendered difficult by the fact that Alavi has written neither a historical analysis nor a theoretical essay, but something between the two to the exclusion of both. Since for Marxists the validity of any historical analysis is a function of the concepts on which it is built, it is more important to concentrate, to begin with, on what we regard as basic theoretical weaknesses in the article. These weaknesses spring from a profound confusion as to the meaning and nature of Marx's categories. Alavi is not exceptional in this respect, for a purely empiricist conception of the categories of historical materialism has become the hallmark of the current of modern 'Marxist' writing that rims from Andre Gunder Frank to Samir Amin and their epigones. The necessary result of this empiricist mediation of Marx's categories is a certain metaphysical scholasticism which builds its conceptions of historical development on a series of forced abstractions.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/50-years-ago/50-years-ago-india-and-colonial-mode-production.html>

88. Between Rice-bags and Conscience. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol. 60. NO-49. 6th Dec 2025.

The recent arrest of two Catholic nuns on charges of attempting forced religious conversion necessitates that the limits of the constitutionally guaranteed right to propagate religion and the opposition to Christian missionary activities are examined. The criminalisation of allurements in anti-conversion legislations needs to be problematised, given the co-implication of spiritual and material interests, which makes it difficult to maintain the binaries underlying the juridical understanding of voluntariness.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/49/alternative-standpoint/between-rice-bags-and-conscience.html>

89. Vigilantism Trumps Justice. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol. 60. NO-49. 6th Dec 2025.

In a move fraught with legal and political consequences, the Uttar Pradesh government has filed an application to withdraw all charges that had been made against 18 men accused of Mohammad Akhlaq's lynching. This case is significant because it demonstrates how criminal law serves as an instrument of the state, contingent on political will that can either initiate or obviate the process of justice. The UP government's retreat from charging the perpetrators of this heinous hate crime can be seen as a win for vigilante justice.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/49/commentary/vigilantism-trumps-justice.html>

90. An Analysis of Trump's Tariff Policy. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol. 60. NO-49. 6th Dec 2025.

Examining the rationale for Trump's tariffs, this article argues that while tariffs are problematic as a policy instrument, the Trump administration is strategically deploying them in an attempt to address large current account deficits. It identifies the countries that are most vulnerable to Trump's tariffs and measures vulnerability by calculating the share of each country's exports to the United States relative to their gross domestic product. As an exercise, it examines the bilateral trade of the US with Canada, China, India, and Mexico.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2025/49/insight/analysis-trumps-tariff-policy.html>

91. Limits of Mingling: Emerging New Forms of Interaction in Rural Bihar. Economic & Political Weekly. Vol. 60. NO-49. 6th Dec 2025.

The new form of interaction of upper caste women with other caste members is sought to be understood against the backdrop of socio-economic changes in a village in north Bihar. This issue is explored through the narratives of Bhumihar women, collected through fieldwork in a village of Gopalganj district in Bihar. Bhumihar women, traditionally restricted in their physical mobility and confined within the domestic sphere, have recently started stepping outside their *chaukhat* (threshold) in the village spaces for various purposes. A new form of

interaction of Bhumihaar women with other caste members in such spaces reflects and reshapes the existing caste hierarchy.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/review-rural-affairs/limits-mingling.html>

92. Chris Waller, not Kevin Hassett, should lead the Federal Reserve. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

On November 30TH President Donald Trump said he had decided whom to nominate as the next chair of the Federal Reserve. He has since said he will reveal his choice early next year. In betting markets, money has piled on Kevin Hassett, his trusted economic adviser. Mr Trump is desperate for the Fed to cut interest rates faster. He has tried to oust Lisa Cook, a Fed governor; the row over whether he can will be heard by the Supreme Court in January. And he has already put one of his advisers, Stephen Miran, on the Fed board temporarily. Mr Miran has voted for bumper rate cuts. As chair, Mr Hassett would paddle in the same direction.

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2025/12/02/chris-waller-not-kevin-hassett-should-lead-the-federal-reserve>

93. Kyrgyzstan is losing its status as Central Asia's only democracy. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

KYRGYZSTAN USED to be an exception in Central Asia: the sole democracy in a region run by strongmen, albeit a flawed one. That is rapidly ceasing to be the case. It regressed a bit closer to the mean on November 30th, when a parliamentary election produced victory for candidates loyal to Sadyr Japarov, the increasingly authoritarian president. That will help him consolidate power as he eyes a second term.

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2025/12/04/kyrgyzstan-is-losing-its-status-as-central-asias-only-democracy>

94. America is foolishly waving goodbye to thousands of Chinese boffins. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

CHINESE-BORN brainiacs have been at the forefront of innovation in America. Yang Chen-Ning, a Nobel-prizewinning physicist who died in October, was one such. But a mixture of pushes (such as the hostility of Donald Trump's administration to all sorts of newcomers) and pulls (including China's lavish support for science and tech) mean many are now following the path Yang took later in life: he returned to China in his 80s to teach at Tsinghua University in Beijing. Today, a host of Chinese youngsters are also choosing not to go to America to study at all.

<https://www.economist.com/china/2025/12/02/america-is-foolishly-waving-goodbye-to-thousands-of-chinese-boffins>

95. After a terrible fire in Hong Kong, public fury smoulders. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.



AN INFERNO IN the Wang Fuk Court housing complex set seven tower blocks aflame on November 26th. It killed more than 150 people and left another 2,100 homeless. Dozens are still missing. In the days after, authorities made 15 arrests for suspected manslaughter and 12 for suspected corruption (it remains unclear whether some people were detained on both counts). With public outrage mounting, John Lee, Hong Kong's leader, announced on December 2nd that a judge-led, independent committee would review the cause of the blaze.

<https://www.economist.com/china/2025/12/04/after-a-terrible-fire-in-hong-kong-public-fury-smoulders>

96. The general who refused to crush Tiananmen's protesters. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

AS PRO-DEMOCRACY protests swelled in Beijing and cities around China in May 1989, leaders decided that only the army could put a stop to them. But one major-general, in charge of 15,000 troops told to impose martial law in the capital, objected to the order. The Chinese authorities never made this public, nor did they reveal that he was punished with (a relatively lenient) five years in prison. They prefer to gloss over what happened during those tumultuous weeks. But a recently leaked video of the general's court-martial provides vivid insight into how—even under China's Communist Party—compliance with the leadership's wishes is not guaranteed.

<https://www.economist.com/china/2025/12/04/the-general-who-refused-to-crush-tiananmens-protesters>

97. Republicans still don't know what to do with Obamacare. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

PICTURE A Republican voter. Perhaps they are in Texas or Florida, a farmer or someone running their own small company. These people are more likely to get their health insurance with supercharged subsidies for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplaces. The boosted tax credits are set to expire at the end of December, probably causing 3.5m people to become uninsured by 2027, according to the Congressional Budget Office, a non-partisan scorekeeper. But despite the fact that many of their voters rely on them, Republicans, in Congress and in the White House, have yet to decide on a solution, or even if this is a problem.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2025/12/04/republicans-still-dont-know-what-to-do-with-obamacare>

98. Leaf blowers are the latest thing dividing Americans. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

MANY TOPICS divide Americans: illegal immigration, abortion, the rights of transgender people. And then there are leaf blowers. In recent years dozens of municipalities have enacted ordinances restricting or entirely banning the use of petrol-powered garden tools. Over 160 cities now ban them, according to CoPIRG, a Colorado-based consumer watchdog. The politics of such bans is not always straightforward. Places choosing to do it should prepare for blowback.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2025/12/01/leaf-blowers-are-the-latest-thing-dividing-americans>

99. A special election puts Democrats on track to flip the House. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

In March 2018 a Democrat won a stunning victory in a special election for Pennsylvania's 18th district in the House of Representatives, flipping a seat that Donald Trump had won by 20 points. The result made clear that Republicans' House majority would soon be washed away in the midterms. Ahead of the special election held on December 2nd in Tennessee's seventh district, which Mr Trump had won by a similar amount, Democrats hoped to repeat the feat. This time, however, Republicans held the seat by nine percentage points—a good-not-great showing for Democrats in a conservative region.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2025/12/04/a-special-election-puts-democrats-on-track-to-flip-the-house>

100. AIs could turn opinion polls into gibberish. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

POLLSTERS HAVE been burning through their nine lives. First, as caller ID spread, people stopped answering their phone calls. Response rates tumbled to single-digit percentages. Then political polarisation and distrust made some Americans less likely to answer surveys. That contributed to a series of embarrassing polling misses in elections where Donald Trump was on the ballot. The internet and smartphones offered some relief, because they allowed polling firms to reach millions of people quickly and cheaply. Now pollsters face yet another test: large language models can answer surveys as a human would, often undetected.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2025/12/02/ais-could-turn-opinion-polls-into-gibberish>

101. What will your child's Trump Account be worth?. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

Britain in the 2000s, under the centre-left globalisation-loving premiership of Tony Blair, is hardly where Donald Trump usually looks for inspiration. But the president seems enamoured of one of that government's totemic, if now-scrapped, policies: investment accounts for babies.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2025/12/04/what-will-your-childs-trump-account-be-worth>

102. Some cocaine-smuggling presidents are more innocent than others. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

Both men have been accused of helping smuggle drugs from Venezuela into America, and their American indictments bolster mostly the same charges with the same talk of go-fast vessels, clandestine airstrips, bribery, machineguns, and cocaine by the tonne. Nicolás Maduro, the president of Venezuela, is alleged to have

“participated in a corrupt and violent narco-terrorism conspiracy”, and Juan Orlando Hernández, the former president of Honduras, to have “participated in a corrupt and violent drug-trafficking conspiracy”.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2025/12/04/some-cocaine-smuggling-presidents-are-more-innocent-than-others>

103. Why does Donald Trump care about Honduras’s election?. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

Donald Trump has busied himself in Latin America this year. He tried and failed to use tariffs and sanctions to force Brazil to halt the trial of his ally, the right-wing former president Jair Bolsonaro; he gave financial support to stabilise the Argentine peso and help President Javier Milei through his midterms; he blows up what his Pentagon says are drug-trafficking boats off the coasts of Venezuela and Colombia; he threatens Venezuela’s dictator, Nicolás Maduro, with military force.

<https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2025/12/03/why-does-donald-trump-care-about-hondurass-election>

104. Syria uneasily celebrates a year of liberation. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

THE Crackle of explosions echoes across the Damascus sky. A year ago such blasts were the soundtrack to rebel forces bearing down on the capital. Today they come from celebratory fireworks. Syrians are preparing for the first anniversary of their liberation from the regime of Bashar al-Assad, Syria’s blood-soaked dictator who fled on December 8th 2024. Billboards celebrating their freedom plaster the city. Syrians have travelled to the capital from all over the country in anticipation of the celebrations.

<https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2025/12/04/syria-uneasily-celebrates-a-year-of-liberation>

105. An insurgency may be brewing against Syria’s new leaders. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

The meandering roads through Latakia, Syria’s Alawite heartland, feel deceptively calm. In March they were the scene of massacres by pro-government forces in which more than 1,500 people were killed after an attempted insurrection by Alawite militants. The bloodshed jolted Syria awake to sectarian tensions that many had preferred to ignore.

<https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2025/12/04/an-insurgency-may-be-brewing-against-syrias-new-leaders>

106. Binyamin Netanyahu has asked for a presidential pardon. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

For nearly six turbulent years, the one constant in Israel has been the trial of Binyamin Netanyahu. Not just because the court proceedings have been under way



throughout, at a snail's pace and with no end in sight, but because almost everything happening in Israel—from decisions about wars to those about elections and legislation—should be seen through the prism of the prime minister's trial.

<https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2025/12/04/binyamin-netanyahu-has-asked-for-a-presidential-pardon>

107. Greece is teaching Germany how to get government online. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

The inefficiencies of Europe's paper-based bureaucracies are legendary. During the covid pandemic, German health authorities demanded that test centres print and fax results to them, only to then type them back into a computer. Many Spaniards give up on the maze of forms entirely, instead hiring a gestor, a kind of professional bureaucracy-wrangler. Governments mostly want to get online, and the European Union's post-pandemic recovery fund was aimed partly at helping them. But paper habits are hard to quit.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2025/12/04/greece-is-teaching-germany-how-to-get-government-online>

108. Polls predicting the next British election are not to be trusted. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

"Sky News can now reveal the latest polling projection from YouGov," announced the channel's presenter. "It puts Reform UK on course to be the next government and Nigel Farage, of course, to be the next prime minister." The segment, which aired on September 26th, was reporting on a polling projection known as MRP (multilevel regression and post-stratification), from YouGov. It was framed as if it were an exit poll—yet an election is probably years away. Any poll that claims to show results constituency by constituency should be treated with scepticism.

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2025/12/04/polls-predicting-the-next-british-election-are-not-to-be-trusted>

109. Are Brits really leaving the country in droves?. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

THE NEWS that net migration to Britain is plummeting should have been met with cheers from across the political spectrum. But something in the statistics released on November 27th bothered commentators: the number of British citizens emigrating appears to have rocketed in recent years. The Times and Telegraph called it an "exodus". The Daily Mail called it a "brain drain from Starmer's socialist chaos". They could not be more wrong.

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2025/12/04/are-brits-really-leaving-the-country-in-droves>

110. Pity the AVOCADOs. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

British politics is an acronym soup. It is a land of nimbys (not in my back yard) and yimbys (their antonyms). oaps have long been feared and courted by politicians. The henrys (high earners, not rich yet) have emerged as another key category. For a decade, “waspi women” (Women Against State Pension Inequality) dressed as suffragettes have berated politicians outside party conferences for equalising the pension age between men and women in 1995. To this list, another must be added: avocados.

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2025/12/03/pity-the-avocados>

111. Trumpworld thinks Europe has betrayed the West. Economist. 6th Dec 2025. AFEW MONTHS ago Western governments were sunk in gloom because America no longer sounded or acted like a reliable friend. Today American flakiness is the least of their worries. A growing fear among allies, notably in European countries run by old-school centrists, is that President Donald Trump is choosing sides—and treating liberal Westerners as adversaries.

<https://www.economist.com/international/2025/12/02/trumpworld-thinks-europe-has-betrayed-the-west>

112. The horse that outran the field. Frontline. Vol 42. No-22. 15th Dec 2025. Ever since the results of the 2025 Bihar Assembly election were announced, two questions have been frequently asked: what happened in this election and how? In other words, how did the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) manage to sweep this election, and why did the Mahagathbandhan fail so miserably? Let us take a deep dive and analyse the verdict carefully.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/politics/2025-bihar-election-analysis-nda-victory-mahagathbandhan-failure/article70303878.ece>

113. Editor’s note: A masterclass in ‘level’ playing fields. Frontline. Vol 42. No-22. 15th Dec 2025.

Touring Bihar before the election was a little like going back in time. While political editor Anand Mishra and I found a striking growth of “visible” urban works such as roads and flyovers, “invisible” markers such as urbanisation, rural progress, or women’s empowerment were still missing. Anand, who is from Bihar, commented that it seemed as if his people were still waiting for Godot. Nitish Kumar has been in power for 20 years, and the alliance he leads has been voted back with a substantial majority. Such a sweeping victory once again invisibilises other, more urgent, issues such as precarity, joblessness, and low human development indices that plague Bihar, making electoral victory an end in itself.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/politics/bihar-2025-election-analysis-electoral-transparency/article70307559.ece>

114. Powered by nari Shakti. Frontline. Vol 42. No-22. 15th Dec 2025.

Twenty-eight-year-old Nidhi Kumari (name changed) cast her ballot for the Helicopter symbol, representing the Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), or LJP (RV), which is part of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), in the 2025 Bihar Assembly election, defying her fiancé's insistence that she should support the opposition Mahagathbandhan candidate. A sonographer by profession, Nidhi is loyal to the NDA not because of party politics but because of a deeply personal conviction about Nitish Kumar's transformative impact on women's lives.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/politics/bihar-election-2025-nitish-kumar-women-voters-nda-landslide-analysis/article70307325.ece>

115. The battle beyond Bihar. Frontline. Vol 42. No-22. 15th Dec 2025.

After the BJP's stunning performance in the Bihar Assembly election, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, addressing jubilant party workers at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi on November 14, declared that his party will now "uproot the jungle raj" in West Bengal, where the election is due in six months. As expected, the Trinamool Congress reacted sharply, seeking to highlight how West Bengal is different from other States and how it will close its doors to the BJP.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/politics/bihar-election-nda-landslide-mgb-opposition-crisis-analysis/article70307656.ece>

116. A vote against tokenism. Frontline. Vol 42. No-22. 15th Dec 2025.

As the results of the Bihar Assembly election trickled in, it became increasingly evident by early afternoon that the NDA was cruising towards a huge majority. The Mahagathbandhan (Grand Alliance), on the other hand, was headed for what would eventually become its poorest performance since the 2010 election. Amid the ebb and flow of tallies flashing across television screens, two political formations—outside the two principal alliances—captured an unusual share of public curiosity: election strategist-turned-politician Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraj Party and Asaduddin Owaisi's All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM).

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/politics/bihar-assembly-election-aimim-muslim-vote-fragmentation/article70298054.ece>

117. Can the son rise again?. Frontline. Vol 42. No-22. 15th Dec 2025.

For the 2025 Bihar Assembly election, pollsters had largely favoured the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) over the Mahagathbandhan of the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), the Congress, and Left parties, led by RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav. But the results—with the BJP securing 89 seats and emerging as the dominant force for the first time in Bihar's electoral history—have stunned and shocked Tejashwi Yadav, the Mahagathbandhan's Chief Ministerial candidate. Tejashwi, in fact, has barely managed to retain his Leader of the Opposition status, as his party has been reduced to 25 seats in the 243-member State Assembly, down from 75 seats it had won in 2020.



<https://frontline.thehindu.com/politics/tejashwi-yadav-future-bihar-rjd-crisis-mandal-politics/article70303224.ece>

118. Red Fort blast exposes structural intelligence crisis. Frontline. Vol 42. No-22. 15th Dec 2025.

The car explosion near Delhi's Red Fort on November 10 has shaken India's security establishment. Not just for its audacity but for what it may signify: a possible shift in the country's terror landscape—from cross-border operations to locally driven violence in big cities.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/politics/inside-delhi-blast-white-collar-terror-module/article70270827.ece>

## SCIENCE

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119. Why autism should not be treated as a single condition. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

From the outside, autism can be difficult to understand. The unique sensory world of an autistic person can mean that a joyful event—like a Christmas party—can become nightmare of noise, lights, jostling and invisible social rules. Yet sometimes autism offers huge upsides, such as giftedness in music, maths, or art.

<https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2025/12/03/why-autism-should-not-be-treated-as-a-single-condition>

120. Surging satellite numbers threaten to dazzle even space telescopes. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

One of the reasons astronomers like to put telescopes in space is that the “seeing” is better. With no turbulent atmosphere in the way the stars shine steadily, rather than twinkling as they do when seen from the ground.

<https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2025/12/03/surging-satellite-numbers-threaten-to-dazzle-even-space-telescopes>

121. A Chinese firm attempts to bring a booster rocket back to Earth. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

ZHANG CHANGWU and Kang Yonglai are names less familiar in the West than Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos. But that may soon change. They are the bosses, respectively, of LandSpace and Space Pioneer, two of China's leading private space-launch companies. These firms are still a long way behind Mr Musk's SpaceX and Mr Bezos's Blue Origin. But, when it comes to technological developments in a wide variety of fields, China's recent history has often felt, to paraphrase Lenin, like one of decades when nothing happens followed by weeks when decades happen.

<https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2025/12/03/a-chinese-firm-attempts-to-bring-a-booster-rocket-back-to-earth>

## SOCIOLOGY

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122. Donna Lieberman Is at the Wheel. New Yorker. 8th December 2025.

At a pottery studio in Prospect Heights the other day, Donna Lieberman, the executive director of the New York Civil Liberties Union, proudly showed off her clay-marked attire: a blue T-shirt depicting a white bullhorn, with text declaring, “THIS IS MY PROTEST SHIRT.” Her favorite outfit to throw clay in, she said, is a shirt from Planned Parenthood that reads “DON’T F\*\*\* WITH US. DON’T F\*\*\* WITHOUT US.” She keeps that one at a studio in Cape Cod, where she vacations. The locals there do “anything that they can do to help me enjoy my pottery,” she said. “They feel like they’re supporting the resistance.”

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/08/donna-lieberman-is-at-the-wheel>

123. A Battle with My Blood. New Yorker. 8th December 2025.

When you are dying, at least in my limited experience, you start remembering everything. Images come in flashes—people and places and stray conversations—and refuse to stop. I see my best friend from elementary school as we make a mud pie in her back yard, top it with candles and a tiny American flag, and watch, in panic, as the flag catches fire. I see my college boyfriend, wearing boat shoes a few days after a record-breaking snowstorm, slipping and falling into a slush puddle. I want to break up with him, so I laugh until I can’t breathe.

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/the-weekend-essay/a-battle-with-my-blood>

124. A Very Big Fight over a Very Small Language. New Yorker. 8th December 2025.

Ask him how it all began, and he remembers the ice. It was a bitter morning in January, 1982, when Bernard Cathomas, aged thirty-six, carefully picked his way up a slippery, sloping Zurich Street. His destination was No. 33, an ochre house with green shutters—the home of Heinrich Schmid, a linguist at the University of Zurich. Inside, the décor suggested that “professor” was an encompassing identity: old wooden floors, a faded carpet, a living room seemingly untouched since the nineteen-thirties, when Schmid had grown up in the house. Schmid’s wife served *Rüeblitorte*, a Swiss carrot cake that manages bourgeois indulgence with a vegetable alibi.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/08/a-very-big-fight-over-a-very-small-language>

125. In the Line of Fire. New Yorker. 8th December 2025.

Around two in the morning on April 13th, an out-of-work car mechanic named Cody Balmer climbed over a metal perimeter fence outside the Pennsylvania governor's residence. In a backpack, he'd brought a sledgehammer and several Molotov cocktails, which he'd made by pouring gasoline siphoned from a lawnmower into Heineken bottles. It took just a few seconds for Balmer to cross a small, well-kept courtyard and reach the south side of the building, a twenty-nine-thousand-square-foot Georgian mansion overlooking the Susquehanna River. He used the sledgehammer to shatter a first-floor window of the state dining room, which housed a Steinway piano, then lit a Molotov cocktail and threw it inside.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/08/in-the-line-of-fire>

126. Trafficking humans is the drug-gangs' grimmest business. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

ISABEL WAS 25 when she left Medellín, in Colombia, for what she thought was a job at a nightclub in the Dominican Republic. The advert on Facebook had promised good pay and said recruiters would cover her flight. She saw it as a way to support her daughter and unemployed parents. But when she arrived, a man took her passport and said she owed \$6,000 for the journey. The debt, he said, could be repaid only through sex. Night after night she was forced to work in brothels as her "debt" kept growing—expenses were added each day. She was never paid a cent.

<https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2025/11/30/trafficking-humans-is-the-drug-gangs-grimmest-business>

127. Shaheen Bagh's bright legacy. Frontline. Vol 42. No-22. 15th Dec 2025. In the lanes of North-East Delhi scarred by the 2020 riots, which left indelible marks on communities, Sunrise Public School in Loni stands as a beacon of renewal. It educates nearly 800 children and has brought back laughter and learning into their lives. This is the core of the mission of Miles2Smile, a pan-India organisation founded by IIT Delhi alumnus Aasif Mujtaba, who drew inspiration from the Shaheen Bagh protests he helped organise in December 2019 alongside student activist Sharjeel Imam. Initially inspired by the women-led sit-in against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the group began by providing aid to displaced families and distributing food and essentials to those whose homes and livelihoods had been destroyed in the riots. Over time, it expanded into creating a network of schools, learning centres, and rehabilitation projects that facilitate education and enable healing in areas like Mustafabad.

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/news/muslim-civil-society-post-shaheen-bagh-india/article70266276.ece>

## SPORTS

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128. How the Sports Stadium Went Luxe. New Yorker. 8th December 2025.



In April, 1966, Roger Angell attended an indoor baseball game, his first, at the Astrodome. “It was not just the prospect of witnessing weatherless baseball played on Chemstrand grass under an acrylic-painted Lucite sky that induced me to travel to Houston last month,” Angell wrote, archly, of visiting what was then the world’s only domed stadium. (It had opened a year earlier.) Angell covered baseball for this magazine for many years, in addition to editing fiction, and although he was ostensibly there to scout the Astros—the team had finished thirty-two games behind the National League-pennant-winning Dodgers the year before—he was distracted from his scorecard by the orange spacesuits and white helmets worn by the groundskeepers, the rainbow-colored tiers of seats, and the billiard-table green of the first synthetic field in pro sports, made of a brand-new Monsanto product called AstroTurf. (The real grass had begun to die during the previous season when the skylights were painted over, to block the glare of the sun. Searching for a blade to chew while watching batting practice, Angell discovered AstroTurf to be “pluckproof.”) Most intrusive of all was the scoreboard—four stories high and lit by more than forty thousand bulbs—the first to offer hype videos and animated ads. “By the middle innings,” he wrote, “I found that I was giving the game only half my attention; along with everyone else, I kept lifting my eyes to that immense, waiting presence above the players.”

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/08/how-the-sports-stadium-went-luxe>

129. China built a swanky cricket pitch to win over tiny Grenada. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

On the island of Grenada, cricket is the sport. “When an international match comes to town, everyone goes crazy,” says Junior Murray, the first Grenadian to play for the West Indies.

<https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2025/12/04/china-built-a-swanky-cricket-pitch-to-win-over-tiny-grenada>

## TRAVEL DESCRIPTION

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130. Why do tourists visit sites of atrocities?. Economist. 6th Dec 2025.

AT DAWN PALMYRA’S magnificent columns and buildings glow gold against the sky. The oasis city (pictured), built on an ancient trading route, was once one of Syria’s most popular tourist sites, attracting an estimated 150,000 visitors annually. After the outbreak of civil war in 2011, that number plummeted as rebels and Islamist groups fought Bashar al-Assad’s forces for control. Palmyra was closed to international visitors: only the Russian and Iranian soldiers who came to prop up Syria’s despot were allowed in.

<https://www.economist.com/culture/2025/12/04/why-do-tourists-visit-sites-of-atrocities>

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

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Periodicity</b>	<b>Place of Publication</b>
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