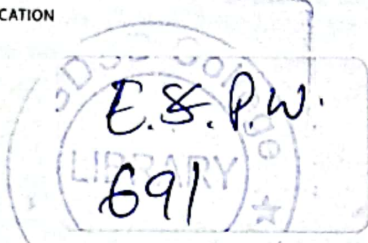


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Reinvention of a Festival

The evolution of *Phoolwalon ki Sair*, from being a monsoon celebration defined by *shringara* to the post-independence reinvention as a state-patronised secular tradition, shows how shifting emotional vocabularies continue to shape the festival's social significance. page 54

Higher Education Governance

The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhistan Bill, 2025 allows the decision-making on higher education institutions to become one-dimensional, promoting hyper-globalisation rather than national innovation for self-reliance and social justice. page 17

Discontent with Israel Lobby

A new political awakening in the United States, involving both, the progressive left and the conservative right, is centred on the urgent need to unhinge American foreign and security policy from Israeli strategic imperatives. page 10

VPP in Meghalaya

The fertile ground for regionalism in the state and the popular yearning for good governance may help the Voice of the People Party to consolidate its position as a regional party. page 61

K N Panikkar (1936–2026)

Panikkar's scholarship, teaching, and public interventions helped redefine how historians approached colonial society, popular protest, and the complex relationship between culture and politics. page 20

Rethinking the US–Israel Alliance

10 The US involvement in the Iran war has brought the question of Israeli dominance over American foreign policy from the political fringes into the mainstream discourse. — *Atul Bhardwaj, Meera Nangia*

Politics of Ecological Governance in Kerala

13 There is a shift from a conservation frame to a climate-resilience frame in ecological governance, connecting ecological protection to outcomes that governments and planners already care about. — *N C Narayanan*

In Search of an Alternative

17 The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhistan Bill, 2025 proposes to statutorily pave the way for centralisation, commercialisation, and privatisation of higher education in India, ending the obligation of the union government to promote education as a publicly funded enterprise for the common good. — *Dinesh Abrol*

KN Panikkar (1936–2026)

20 KN belonged to the generation that fundamentally restructured Indian historiography in the decades after independence. — *Rajan Gurukkal*

Transforming India’s Agricultural Research System

29 Despite food sufficiency, agroecological diversity requires biodiversity-centred research to strengthen ecosystem services and resource sustainability. A shift towards a systems and agri-food perspective calls for greater investment in agroclimatic research, wider dissemination of knowledge, and promotion of sustainable practices. — *Naveen P Singh*

Caste-based Disparities and Multidimensional Poverty

38 The intersections of caste, family characteristics, income, consumption expenditure, multidimensional poverty, and government schemes in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh are examined. Significant disparities among caste groups emerge from the analysis. — *Ajay Sood, Ritesh Singh*

The Law and Its Limitations

46 Gross under-reporting and methodological errors in data collation by the National Crime Records Bureau inadvertently aid the public discourse around the alleged “misuse of domestic violence laws.” A comparison of the data at the national and city levels for Bengaluru reveals a stark difference in conviction rates, indicating systemic issues. — *Bindu Doddahatti, Pragya Solanki*

A History of Emotions

54 *Phoolwalon ki Sair* evolved from a 19th-century monsoon celebration, defined by erotic love, to a late-Mughal expression of *muhabbat* between the king and his subjects. Following its 1961 revival, it was reinvented as a state-patronised secular tradition. Shifting emotional vocabularies continue to shape the festival’s social significance and contemporary contestations. — *Margrit Pernau*

Assertion of Alternative Regional Forces in Meghalaya

61 The factors responsible for the decline of the prevailing regional forces in Meghalaya and the emergence of alternative regional forces during the state assembly elections of 2023 and their continuation in the parliamentary elections of 2024 are analysed. — *Susmita Sen Gupta, Batskhem Myrboh*

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71 *Thomas A Mattappallil* on *Shanarathi Sreekuttan’s* reflections on classroom power hierarchies; *Tejashwini* and *Shyну Philip* on how the *katte* functions as a cultural archive in Indian villages; *Anee Bhattacharyya* on how *Labour of Love* reframes the routine as a site of affective power; and *Last Lines* by *Ponnappa*.

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