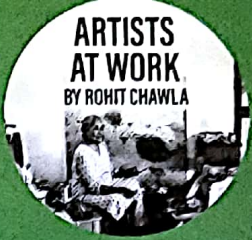


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ARVIND PANAGARIYA ON THE INDO-US TRADE DEAL THE RETURN OF THE BRAHMIN

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Pakistan's Prisoner

The Descent and Despair of Imran Khan By MJ AKBAR



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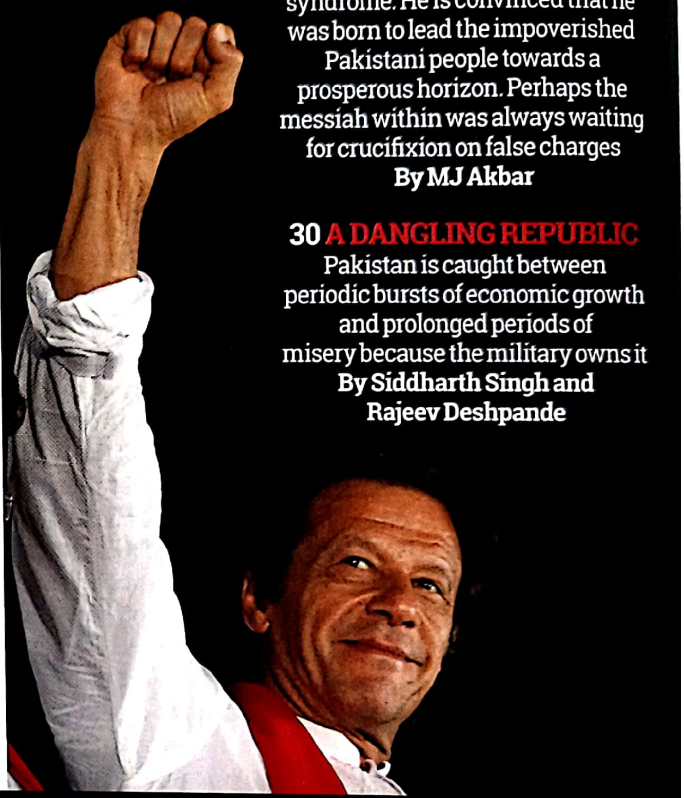
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LETTER OF THE WEEK

The energy at the recent India AI Impact Summit was impossible to ignore ('Modi Aims High', March 2, 2026). Young engineers, startup founders and global executives spoke the language of algorithm and ambition. Yet, beneath the spectacle lay a deeper question: Will India remain a vast marketplace for other people's intelligence, or become a creator of its own? Announcements of data centres, chip partnerships and new language models signal confidence. The presence of leaders from firms such as OpenAI, Google and Nvidia reflects India's growing centrality in the AI economy. Government outreach, policy incentives and digital public infrastructure have clearly made the country attractive. But investment alone does not equal sovereignty. If intellectual property, core models and standards remain overseas, value and leverage will follow them. So the discussion should focus on practical steps like creating data resources, strengthening public research, and training people from all backgrounds. AI can widen inequality or expand opportunity. The difference will depend on whether India chooses visibility or ownership.

Soumyajit Dutta





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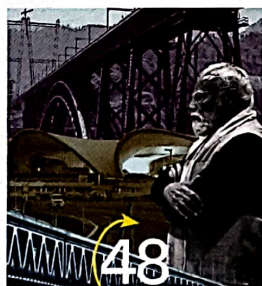
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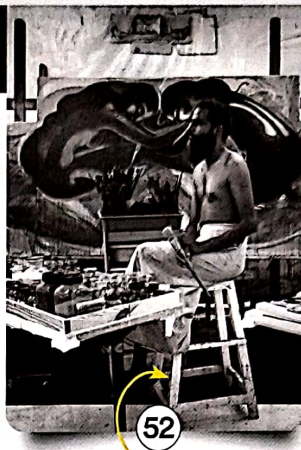
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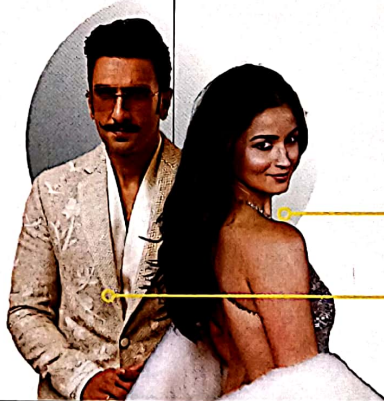
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ART'S DIGITAL LEAP

AI is no longer just a tool that creates patterns in India's art and craft sector; it is changing how the system works ('The Rise of Artistic Intelligence', March 2, 2026). By offering design ideas and visual support, AI gives artisans access to resources once limited to trained designers and big studios. This helps traditional crafts adapt while keeping their core identity. At the same time, online AI platforms are opening new markets, allowing artisans to sell directly to global buyers. However, concerns remain about authenticity, ownership and the danger of similar-looking designs. Recognition, earlier controlled by galleries and institutions, is now shaped by algorithms and digital reach. AI is quietly stitching itself into India's craft story as a new thread shaping how it is imagined, valued and shared with the world.

VK Raghunathan

UNDERWORLD ECHOES

The firing outside filmmaker Rohit Shetty's Juhu residence is more than an isolated crime; it is a reminder of an uneasy history the Hindi film industry thought it had left behind ('The Return of the Underworld', March 2, 2026). The police have said that the members linked to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang have been arrested across states, and the group has publicly claimed responsibility online. Subsequent threats to actors such as Ranveer Singh and the continued targeting of Salman Khan have deepened anxieties. Unlike earlier episodes tied to specific grievances, recent messages appear closer to straightforward extortion. That shift is significant. In the 1990s, Mumbai witnessed criminal networks infiltrating film financing, casting and overseas rights. Today's gangs operate differently—using social media, encrypted calls and recruits with no

prior records—but the objective of fear remains constant. This moment calls for vigilance. Strong enforcement, industry cooperation and swift prosecution are essential to ensure that intimidation does not regain a foothold in India's entertainment capital.

Trisha Mahale

THE CHAGOS QUESTION

The repeated policy shifts of US President Donald Trump over Diego Garcia have complicated the already sensitive question of sovereignty over the Chagos Islands ('Island of the Day Before', March 2, 2026). For Mauritius, the delayed transfer from the UK prolongs a historic grievance, highlighting how strategic interests often override decolonisation commitments and moral clarity. The uncertainty also risks fuelling diplomatic friction in the Indian Ocean, a region already shaped by competing strategic interests.

Subodh Kumar Gupta