

LET INDIA LEAD THE GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE BY SHASHI THAROOR

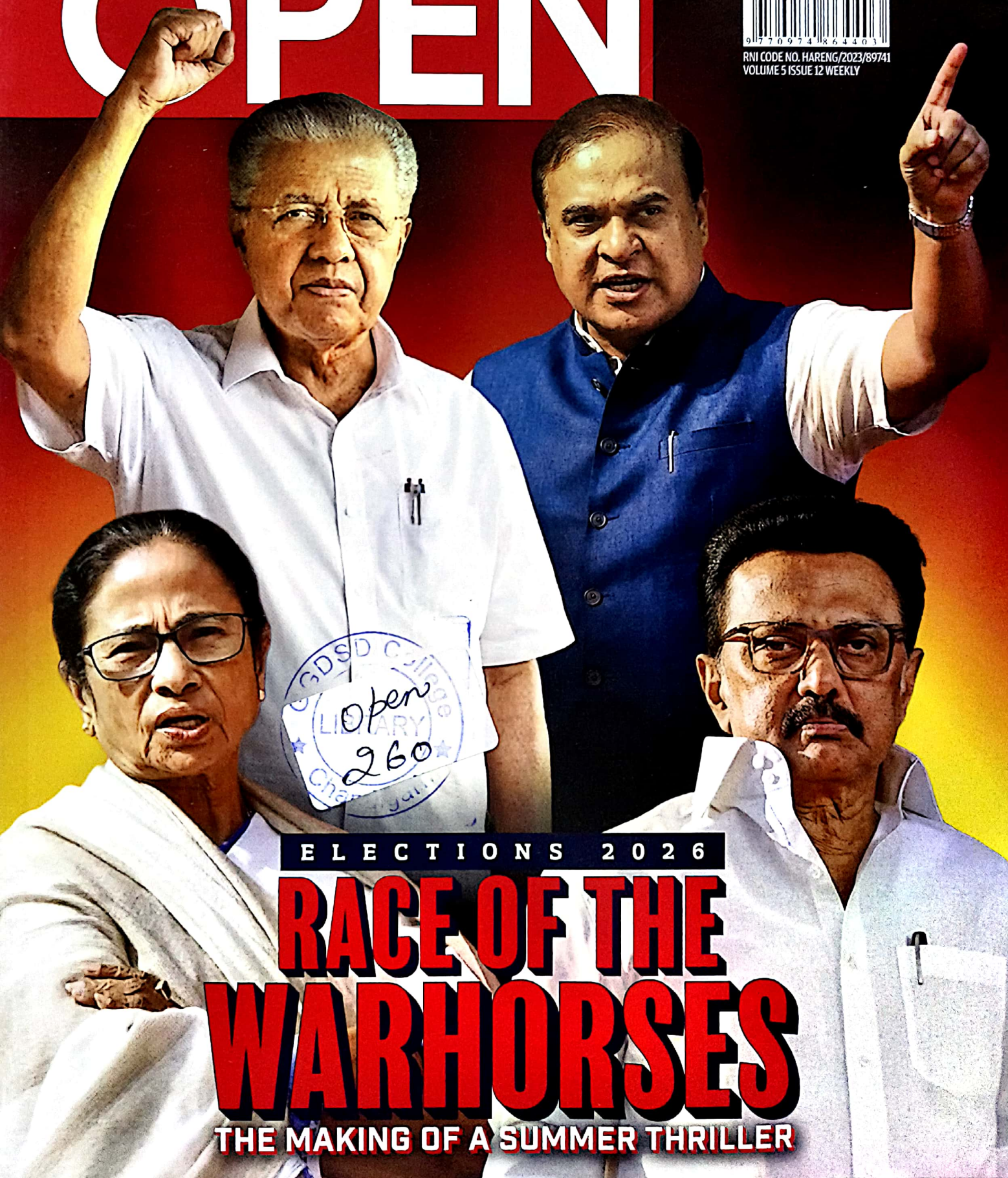
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# RACE OF THE WARHORSES

THE MAKING OF A SUMMER THRILLER

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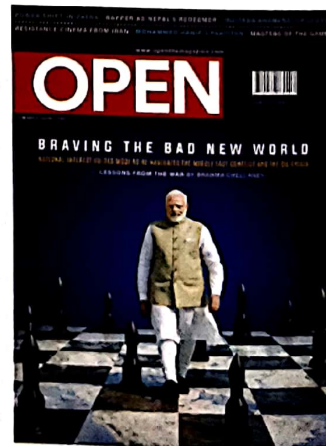
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LETTER OF THE WEEK

India's diplomatic tightrope in the Middle East deserves far greater public attention than it is receiving ('Braving the Bad New World', March 23, 2026). Nearly one crore Indians live and work across Gulf nations and their safety, livelihoods, and the substantial remittance economy that they sustain (\$135 billion in 2024-25) depend on how deftly New Delhi navigates relationships with every party in this deepening conflict. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's unvarnished assessment made in Parliament on March 9 that the situation has got worse was both timely and necessary. India simply cannot afford the luxury of taking sides when its interests are distributed across opposing camps. What is urgently needed is a dedicated inter-ministerial taskforce to coordinate evacuation contingencies, diversify energy sourcing, and maintain diplomatic channels to advocate de-escalation in real time. Parliament must be briefed regularly, and not merely when a crisis forces the issue. India has quietly accumulated remarkable goodwill across this region over decades. The moment demands that goodwill be deployed with both strategic clarity and firm restraint.

A Myilsami



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Cover by SAURABH SINGH

**DOMESTIC FRONT**

The presence of nearly a crore Indians across the Gulf reminds us that foreign policy is no longer an abstract chessboard but a matter of livelihoods, safety, and national nerves ('Braving the Bad New World', March 23, 2026). When turbulence grips the region, it is not just geopolitics that trembles but the homes, aspirations, and bank accounts of families across India. Indians working in the Gulf have for decades provided an economic lifeline that pumps billions of dollars into India each year. What is more worrying is that at this crucial time, the Lok Sabha session was stalled on March 9. Additionally, the opposition has repeatedly criticised the government, saying it had mismanaged the energy sector. In such moments, diplomacy must move with both caution and clarity, and the government must act to

reassure the public in India. The real test of statecraft lies in keeping tempers cool abroad and anxieties calmer at home.

K Chidanand Kumar

**WAY FORWARD**

The analysis on the war in Iran in this essay is both excellent and timely ('The Strategic Limits of Trump's War', by Brahma Chellaney, March 23, 2026). US President Donald Trump has clearly underestimated Iran. Going forward with a shape-shifting and haphazard US involvement is risky. This war has every potential of turning into a new Vietnam for the US. It will perhaps be even more dangerous in a multi-polar world where manufacturing strength is no longer with America. Hopefully, Indian policymakers will grasp these points and desist from openly aligning with the US-Israel bloc. Energy security needs to be

prioritised along with the domestic fallouts of what promises to be a long-drawn crisis.

Sayantani Gupta Jafa

**TEAM INDIA ON TOP**

The Indian cricket team has become the first men's team to win back-to-back T20 World Cups, defeating New Zealand in the final in Ahmedabad ('Masters of the Game', March 23, 2026). The match was a professional performance of the highest order. They were calm under pressure and ruthless when it was required. The defeat against South Africa jolted Team India and it helped them turn around their World Cup campaign. The team management persisted with Abhishek Sharma against popular opinion and he chose the grandest stage to announce himself. That's how Team India came out on top.

Bal Govind