

CAMPAIGN DISPATCHES FROM TAMIL NADU KERALA ASSAM • THE LAST GASP OF MAOISM

www.openthemagazine.com

OPEN



RNI CODE NO. HARENG/2023/89741
VOLUME 5 ISSUE 14 WEEKLY

13 APRIL 2026 / ₹100

THE MISSOIL STRIKE

THE WAR ON ENERGY SECURITY



AN UNEQUAL BURDEN BY BRAHMA CHELLANEY

THE ANARCHIC WORLD ORDER BY MJ AKBAR

+ HOW INDIA IS COPING

EDITOR S Prasannarajan
 CONSULTING EDITOR-AT-LARGE
 Rajeev Deshpande
 EXECUTIVE EDITOR Ullekh NP
 EDITOR-AT-LARGE Siddharth Singh
 DEPUTY EDITORS Madhavankutty Pillai
 (Mumbai Bureau Chief),
 Rahul Pandita, Amita Shah,
 V Shoba (Bengaluru),
 Sudeep Paul,
 Lhendup Gyatso Bhutia (Mumbai)
 ART DIRECTOR Jyoti K Singh
 DEPUTY ART DIRECTOR Saurabh Singh
 SENIOR EDITORS Moinak Mitra,
 Aditya Iyer, Sohini Dey
 SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITOR Antara Raghavan
 ASSISTANT EDITOR Soumava Halder
 SENIOR COPY EDITOR Neelabh Raj
 SENIOR DESIGNERS Anup Banerjee,
 Veer Pal Singh
 PHOTO EDITOR Raul Irani
 DEPUTY PHOTO EDITOR Ashish Sharma
 DIGITAL CONTENT OFFICER
 Rajiv Kumar Singh
 SENIOR EDITOR (WEB) Vijay Soni
 DIGITAL DESK OFFICER Prabhjeet Singh Sethi
 DIGITAL CORRESPONDENT
 (WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA) Shailja Tiwari
 SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER Prashant Kumar
 JUNIOR DIGITAL DESK OFFICER Aniket Jha

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
 Sahil Shetty

CFO Raas Taneja
 NATIONAL SALES HEAD
 Shilpa Saxena

REGIONAL MANAGER - WEST
 Akanksha Abhinav Shah
 NATIONAL HEAD - EDUCATION
 Virender Singh Bhati

HEAD - EVENTS Preeti Misra

HEAD-MARKETING Anupam Ashish

NATIONAL HEAD - CIRCULATION
 Dhanpreet

Amol Joshi (West & East)
 Ranjeet Kumar Yadav (North)
 N Kishore Kumar (South)

HEAD-PRODUCTION Maneesh Tyagi

HEAD DESIGN-ADVERTISING Liju Varghese

All rights reserved throughout the world.
 Reproduction in any manner is prohibited.

Printed and published by Raas Taneja
 on behalf of Open Media Network Pvt Ltd
 Printed at Thomson Press India Ltd,
 18-35 Milestone, Delhi Mathura Road,
 Faridabad-121007 (Haryana) and
 Published in English from 1st Floor,
 Tower 3A, DLF Corporate Park,
 DLF City, Phase-III, MG Road, Gurugram,
 Haryana - 122002.
 Editor: S Prasannarajan

For subscription and other enquiries:
 WhatsApp 'openmag' to 9999800012
 or log on to www.openthemagazine.com
 or call on our Landline no: (0124) 4561900
 or email at:
 customercare@openmedianetwork.in

Volume 5 Issue 14, Weekly, ₹100
 RNI Code No. HARENG/2023/89741
 For April 7-13, 2026
 Total no of pages 68

CONTENTS

3

LOCOMOTIF
 By S Prasannarajan



6

OPENINGS

15

**GAME, SETH
 AND MATCH**
 Myth of the anti-Indian film
 By Suhel Seth

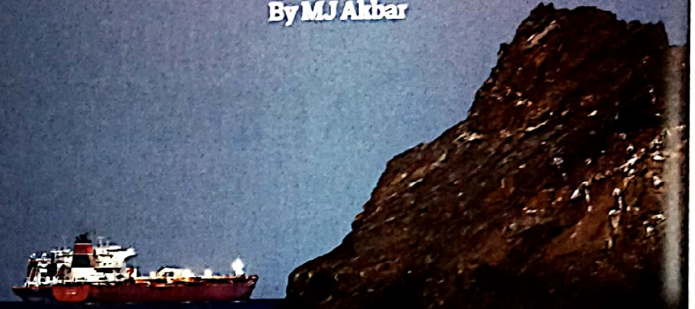
16

COMMENT
 Spare Dhurandhar please
 By Rahul Shivshankar

18

COMMENT
 Refining the partnership
 By Harsh V Pant

20 OPEN ESSAY
 The war of the five seas
 By MJ Akbar



**24 THE WORLD PAYS FOR ONE
 MAN'S EXPANSIONIST FOLLIES**
 From high food prices in Africa to fiscal stress in Asia and
 Latin America, the cost of Donald Trump's war on Iran
 is being borne far from Washington DC
 By Brahma Chellaney

33 STEADY IN THE WHIRL

The Modi government is responding to the possibility of a longer
 war in the Middle East with quick decisions on reducing import
 duties, managing farm inputs, and sealing trade deals
 By Rajeev Deshpande

OPEN MAIL

editor@openmedianetwork.in



LETTER OF THE WEEK

Aditya Dhar's rise from a small home in New Delhi to becoming one of Hindi cinema's most influential directors reflects a larger shift in the industry ('India's Action Hero', April 6, 2026). His recent films, especially the two-part *Dhurandhar*, have struck a chord with audiences because they focus on themes like national security, strength and decisive action. At a time when people are increasingly aware of global tensions and regional threats, such story-telling feels relevant. While some critics question the tone or intent of these films, their wide reach and popularity cannot be denied. Dhar has managed to blend fiction with recent events in a way that keeps audiences engaged. His films have become part of everyday conversation and memes, showing how deeply they have entered popular culture. More importantly, this trend also signals a more confident and bold film industry. Filmmakers today are willing to explore subjects once avoided or handled cautiously. Rather than dismissing such cinema, it should be seen as a reflection of what many Indians feel today—a desire for clarity, strength, and national pride.



Manish Mittal

13 APRIL 2026



READING THE TEA LEAVES
 BJP anchors its campaign in Assam on welfare and a secure border as people sway to the promises of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma
 By Siddharth Singh



SPOT THE LEADER
 Edappadi K Palaniswami struggles hard to keep AIADMK in the sheltering shadow of Jayalalithaa
 By Aditya Iyer



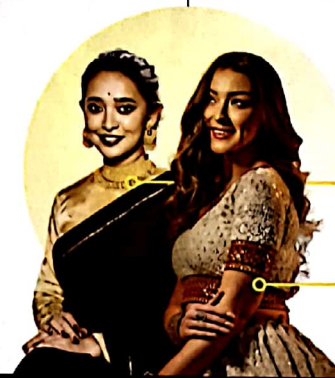
KITCHEN CONFIDENTIAL
 Filmmaker Farah Khan turns her lens on a star-studded culinary show whose real hero is her cook
 By Viren Naidu



THE DEATH OF AN IDEAL
 As competition intensifies ahead of the polls, rising mistrust among religious communities is quietly eroding the social cohesion long celebrated as Kerala's greatest strength
 By Ullekh NP



STALIN'S PLOT
 DMK has turned the election into a battle against New Delhi
 By Amita Shah



PLAYTIME WITH BORIA MAJUMDAR
 The forgotten champion

WATCH PARTY

STARGAZER
 By Kaveree Bamzai

58

THAROOR'S GURU
 Why reformer-saint Narayana Guru matters more today
 By Ullekh NP

59

ORIGIN STORIES
 A poetic journey through Africa's past and present
 By Soumava Haldar

61

THE SOFT BOIL
 Dreams from ashes
 By Sujiv Saran

62

PLAYTIME WITH BORIA MAJUMDAR
 The forgotten champion

64

WATCH PARTY

66

STARGAZER
 By Kaveree Bamzai

Cover by SAURABH SINGH

BOLD STORY

The strong reaction to *Dhurandhar: The Revenge* shows how much the audience mindset has changed ('Dial D for Modi', April 6, 2026). The film is clearly political and does not hide its point of view, yet people have still embraced it in large numbers. This suggests that viewers are no longer swayed only by elite criticism and are willing to make up their own minds. The film's support for a tougher stand on terrorism reflects a wider public belief that India needs a more decisive approach. Many people see recent policies as a break from past hesitation, especially in dealing with cross-border threats. Calling such films "propaganda" may be simplistic. What is different now is that stories aligned with a more assertive India are finding open acceptance, showing a clear shift in public thinking.

Kunal Bansal

WAR WITHOUT END

A month into the Iran war, one thing is clear: nobody has a plan for how it ends ('A Tight Spot in Tehran', by Jason Burke, April 6, 2026). Iran is still standing, oil prices are through the roof, and Donald Trump is asking for a deal. That is not what winning looks like. Iran's plan was never to beat America in a straight fight. It was to make the fight hurt enough so that America would want out. That plan is working. The Strait of Hormuz is effectively under Iranian control, global energy markets are in chaos, and Trump's idea of diplomacy appears to be shouting into a void and hoping someone shouts back. The harder truth is that nobody—not Israel, not the Gulf states, not the US—agrees on what the end of this war should look like. That is not a minor detail. That is the whole problem. Wars without clear goals do not end. Trump has been here before.

Gaza was also going to be quick and decisive. It wasn't. Iran will not be either. Some lessons, it seems, have to be learned more than once.

N Suraj Rao

THE VIJAY FACTOR

Tamil Nadu 2026 is an election nobody can read, and that makes it interesting ('Desperately Stalin', by Sandeep Balakrishna, April 6, 2026). Stalin's government is unpopular, AIADMK is falling apart, and into this gap walks a film star with no ideology, no real party structure, and a stampede at his rally that killed 41 people, which he barely acknowledged. Vijay is not MGR. He is not NTR. Those men had a cause. Vijay has fans, which is not the same thing. Tamil Nadu's voters are sharper than they are given credit for. They know the difference between a hero on screen and a leader in office.

Shalini Amudhan