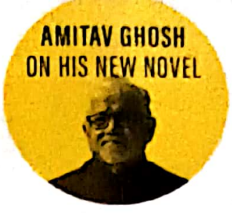


WHAT TO READ AND WATCH THIS YEAR



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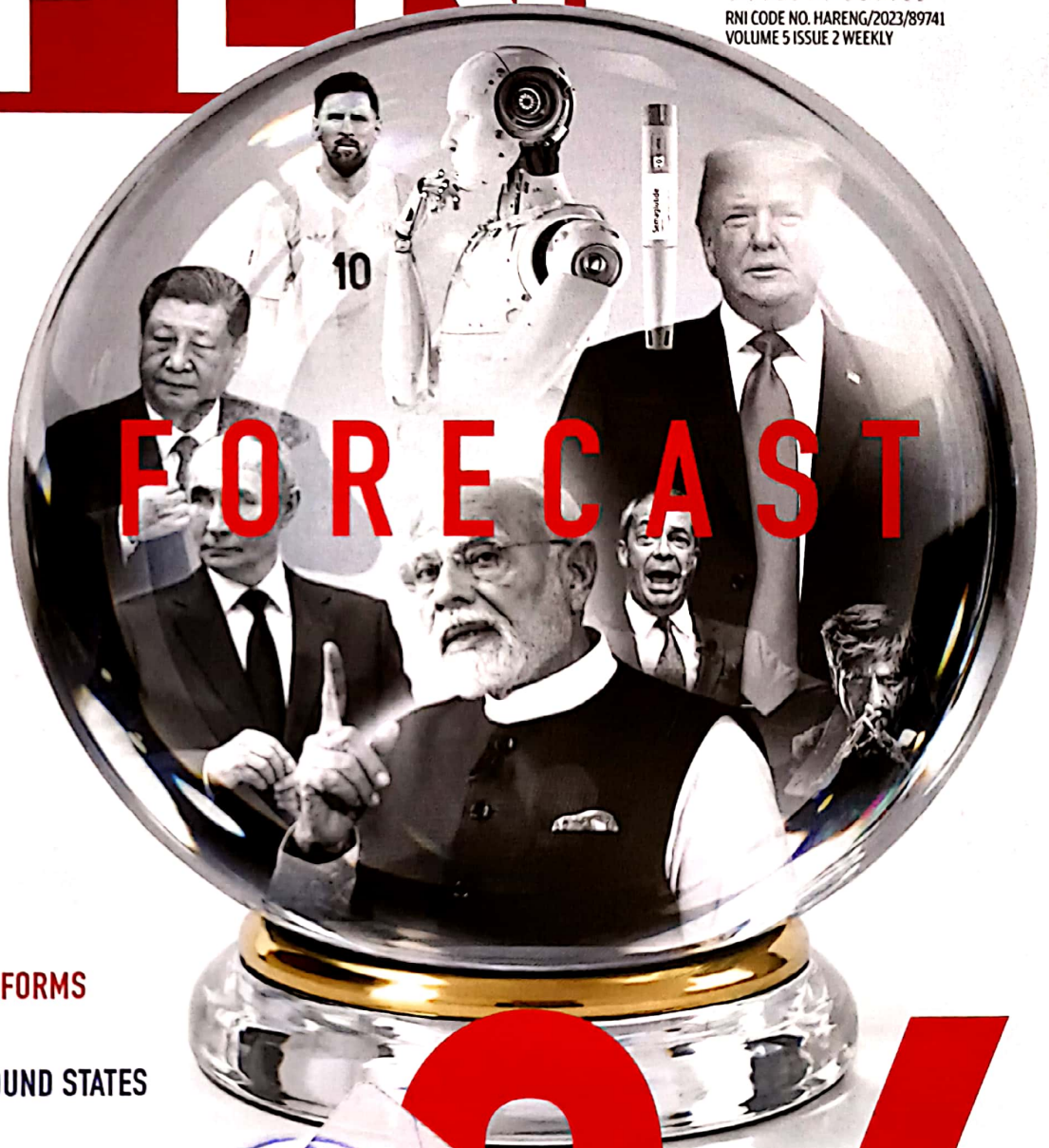
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HIGH STAKES IN BATTLEGROUND STATES

AN AI AGENT FOR ALL SEASONS

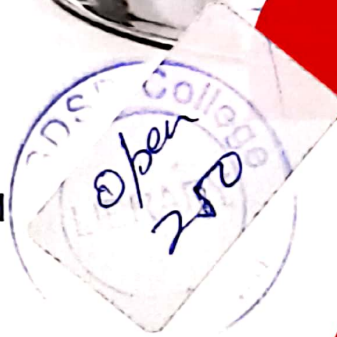
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## OPEN MAIL

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### LETTER OF THE WEEK

Bangladesh is going through another dangerous phase and the violence against Hindus through this turmoil cannot be brushed aside as "isolated incidents". It reflects a deeper failure of the state to protect its minorities when law and order collapses. Whenever political unrest erupts in Bangladesh, Hindus become easy targets—attacked, displaced, or killed simply because they are vulnerable and numerically smaller. This is not just about politics; it is about basic human dignity. A government that cannot ensure the safety of its minorities loses moral authority, no matter how complex the crisis may be. Silence or delayed action sends a message that some lives matter less than others. That perception is dangerous and corrosive. Bangladesh was founded on the promise of secularism and pluralism. Allowing mobs and extremists to hunt minorities betrays that founding idea. The international community, especially neighbouring India, should speak clearly and firmly. Condemning violence is not interference; it is a moral duty. Stability cannot come at the cost of Hindu lives, and pretending otherwise only normalises brutality.

Binu Varghese



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Cover by SAURABH SINGH

**BORROWED MINDS**

The debate on Thomas B Macaulay is often dismissed as an indulgence in historical grievance ('Control C for Culture', by Swapan Dasgupta, January 12, 2026). That is a mistake. Macaulay matters not because of who he was but because of what his ideas quietly normalised in India—notions due to which Indian traditions were considered mere folklore and never seen seriously. Macaulay's vision on education trained generations to see their own civilisational inheritance as an embarrassment. This resulted in an erasure of Indian culture. Indians learned to argue, govern, and even reform themselves using borrowed ideas while their own philosophies were treated as relics rather than resources. This intellectual asymmetry outlived the Empire. Long after Independence, mental habits formed

under colonial teachings remained intact, shaping institutions, curricula and the elite consensus.

Sourabh Lahiri

**CLARITY WORKS**

*Dhurandhar* has struck a chord because it offers clarity in a cluttered cinematic space ('Framing the New Nation', January 12, 2026). It does not rush or over-explain. It simply tells a story and trusts the audience to stay with it. That confidence runs through the film and sets it apart from much of what passes for big cinema today. What stands out is the calm with which the film handles its ideas. There is no desperation to impress, only a steady belief in the material. Viewers seem to have responded to that sincerity. At a time when many films mistake noise for impact, *Dhurandhar's* success feels less like hype and more like word-of-mouth respect—and that is often the

most genuine kind of victory.

KV Krishnaswamy

**STRATEGIC SILENCE**

The US' abduction of Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores has raised concerns about power exercised without restraint among other countries ('India Steps around the Venezuelan Trap to Safeguard Its Interests', January 5, 2026). India's restrained response on this issue shows diplomatic realism in an uncertain global climate where even longstanding partners can behave unpredictably. For New Delhi, the priority is to keep channels open while avoiding moral grandstanding that narrows room for manoeuvre. Many countries share this discomfort even as they engage with the US on trade and security. The episode shows that instability caused by external interference rarely ends where it starts.

Manish Solanki