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# OPEN



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Bengal  
Reborn

STAR-STRUCK  
TAMIL NADU

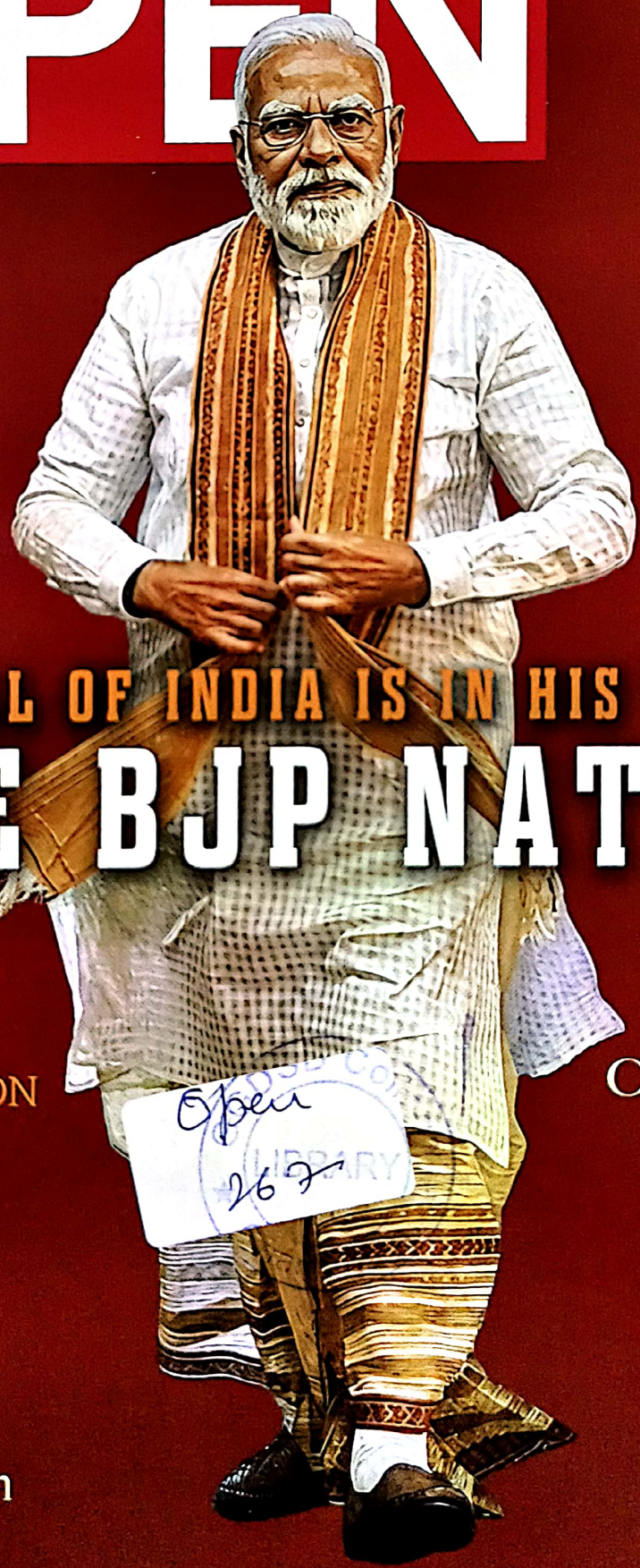
## NOW ALL OF INDIA IS IN HIS THRALL THE BJP NATION

THE OPPOSITION  
FADE-OUT

Communist-Free  
India

Sun Sets on  
Dravidianism

A SECURE  
MANDATE



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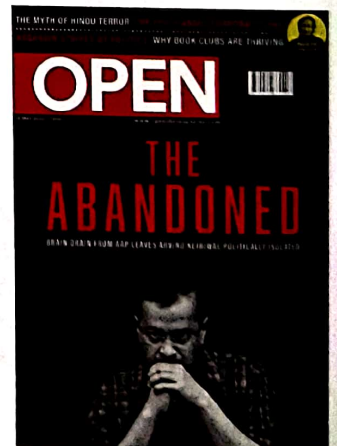
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### LETTER OF THE WEEK

The defection of seven Rajya Sabha MPs is a significant blow to the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), and it reveals deeper problems within the party ('Implosion', May 11, 2026). For a party that built its identity on unity and clean politics, such exits raise uncomfortable questions. Kejriwal now appears politically isolated, and in today's optics-driven landscape, perception can be as damaging as reality. The timing makes the setback more serious. Punjab is the party's only state government, and any sign of weakness at the top risks casting a shadow over its functioning. Rivals will see an opening while supporters may begin to doubt AAP's strength. It also raises questions about the party's ability to manage dissent. The loss is not just in numbers; it affects credibility and authority. If these internal issues are not addressed quickly, AAP risks collapse. The coming months will be crucial in deciding whether AAP can steady itself or face further setbacks. How the party responds now will determine whether this is a temporary setback or the start of a deeper decline.

KT Gopalakrishnan





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By Kaveree Bamzai

Cover by SAURABH SINGH

**LOSS OF TRUST**

What began on the streets of Delhi as a movement against corruption now feels like a lesson in how politics changes those who enter it ('The Act of Unravelling', May 11, 2026). Arvind Kejriwal did not rise on a family name or larger-than-life charisma as other politicians do. He rose because many Indians believed he genuinely wanted to get rid of corruption. For a while that belief seemed justified. AAP moved from protest to power, changed the conversation on schools, healthcare and subsidies, and gave voters an alternative. But governing is very different from protesting. Over time, internal criticism was pushed aside, decision-making became concentrated, and the party began to look less different from the political system it once attacked. Elections can be lost and won again. The harder loss is of trust—when a movement built on hope

slowly starts looking like every other party it had promised to replace.

Rhea Malhotra

**FAKE TERROR**

The decision of the Bombay High Court to discharge the four accused in the 2006 Malegaon blasts case has brought the issue back in focus ('The Myth of Hindu Terror', May 11, 2026). For years, the case was linked to a political narrative shaped during the time of UPA. The court's ruling questions that narrative and how the case was presented. What stands out is how much influence such cases can have on public opinion. When courts reach a different conclusion, it can change the way people see past claims. The judgment is likely to spark fresh political debate, with the two sides interpreting it differently. It also shows the need for care

before turning criminal cases into political issues as the impact can last long after the facts are tested out in court.

Abhishek Singh

**INDIAN FRAMES**

Raghu Rai has spent a lifetime showing India to itself ('India's Visionary', May 11, 2026). His photographs carry the noise of crowded streets and the silence of grief. Across decades, his camera travelled through moments of triumph, tragedy and everyday life, preserving them with rare sensitivity. There is honesty in his work, but also patience, curiosity and deep human warmth. In an age where images are produced and forgotten within seconds, Rai's photographs continue to stay with the viewer, reminding us that the strongest images are often the ones that quietly tell the truth.

Meera Bhasin