

THE KEIR STARMER MELTDOWN RETURN OF THE GODDESS XI INVOKES THE THUCYDIDES TRAP

THE RADICAL GAZE OF AMRITA SHER-GIL TALKING ABOUT MENOPAUSE THE ART OF DINING ALONE

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WITH AUSTERITY AND SMART DIPLOMACY

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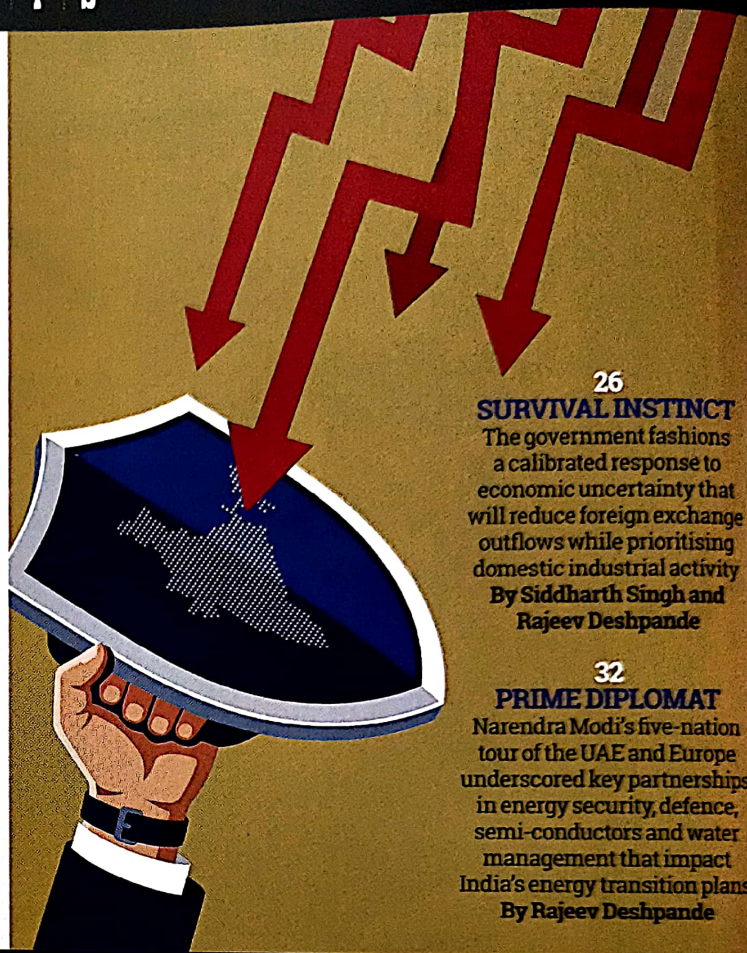
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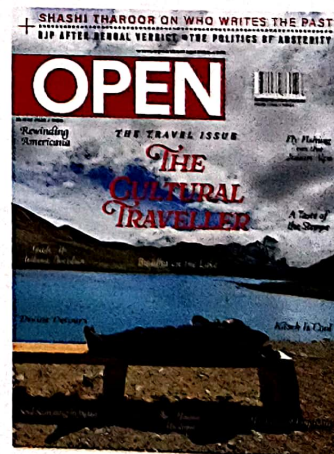
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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Travel today is increasingly becoming an exercise in collecting selfies while missing the soul of the destination ('The Cultural Traveller,' May 25, 2026). Many tourists also focus on taking photographs than absorbing their surroundings. Others concentrate on ticking destinations off their list rather than taking the time to explore them. A cup of coffee, a bakery in a remote village or even street art in a foreign city often reveals more about people and history than guidebooks or the internet can. Places constantly reinvent themselves to survive changing times, and travellers who observe closely become witnesses to these quiet transformations rather than tourists passing through. Ancient traditions and modern consumerism now stand side by side across the world. Sacred heritage sites compete for attention with luxury resorts, viral cafés and curated experiences designed for social media approval. Yet, beneath this noise lies the enduring human story of resilience, migration, aspiration and identity. Travel becomes truly worthwhile only when it leaves the mind fuller, not merely the phone gallery.

K Chidanand Kumar





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Cover by
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DUE PROCESS

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said that he will begin his second term with a renewed focus on the state's identity and border security ('Security First' May 25, 2026). This reflects the political priorities that have consistently resonated with Assam's electorate. Sarma has also stated that the new West Bengal government's decision to give land to the Border Security Force (BSF) will boost Assam's security. His move to fast-track a state-specific Uniform Civil Code is bold but legally contested. The UCC is something Assam has been considering since 2024, after watching the legislation in Uttarakhand. The challenge is to pursue these objectives through legal processes and civil institutions rather than through taking administrative shortcuts which will face judicial challenges and, more

importantly, deepen social anxieties rather than resolve them.

Swathi Senthilkumar

KEEPING PROMISES

Newcomer C Joseph Vijay taking charge as Tamil Nadu chief minister was an unexpected event in Indian politics ('Great Expectations' May 25, 2026). Voters have placed an extraordinary amount of trust in a first-time politician. Within 48 hours, Vijay moved on several pre-poll promises, and has stated that he belongs to Hindus Muslims, and Christians alike. Sustaining his momentum over five years will require not just intent but competent administration around him. The nine ministers Vijay has inducted are a credible mix, but Tamil Nadu is a complex, economically significant state with demanding governance challenges. Vijay cannot bask in his victory for too long. He must start

delivering on his promises soon.

SM Jeeva

NEW PRIORITIES

Suvendu Adhikari's early moves as West Bengal's first BJP chief minister, such as handing over land to the BSF and rolling out Ayushman Bharat, indicate his decisiveness ('Man on a Mission' May 25, 2026). His cultural visits to Jorasanko, Bharat Sevashram Sangha, and Kalighat signal a government that understands symbolism as governance. Bengal has a deep sense of cultural pride, and BJP has rightly decided to speak that language. But the real test is law and order. Depoliticising the police force, historically Bengal's most entrenched problem, will determine whether Adhikari's mandate translates to lasting change.

M Barathi