

THE TAMIL IDEOLOGICAL WAR REAPING THE SECURITY DIVIDEND

WHY MUHAMMAD YUNUS IS SCARED THE TRUTH ABOUT THE GIG ECONOMY A MUSEUM FOR MF HUSAIN

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RNI CODE NO. HARENG/2023/89741
VOLUME 5 ISSUE 3 WEEKLY

26 JANUARY 2026 / ₹80



RULE AMERICANA

LIVING WITH TRUMP'S IMPERIUM



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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:
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 or log on to www.openmagazine.com
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Volume 5 Issue 3, Weekly, ₹80
 RNI Code No. HARENG/2023/89741
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LETTER OF THE WEEK

The global framework that once tied nations to shared rules now feels fragile ("The Year of the Violent Whirlpool", by MJ Akbar, January 19, 2026). The recent US military operation in Venezuela and the capture of Nicolás Maduro by American forces is a stark example of power overtaking principle. Legal experts argue that such an action, without UN Security Council approval, undermines international law and the notion of sovereign equality that the post-1945 order was built on. At the same time, established democracies are facing their own tests. In the US and Israel, leaders such as Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu attract both staunch support and deep criticism for actions that strain democratic norms — from polarising rhetoric to domestic legal scrutiny and social protest movements. Meanwhile, authoritarian leaders like Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping continue to pursue their visions of global influence, challenging Western dominance while avoiding clear alternatives to the established order. Democracies are divided, authoritarian regimes are tense, and global rules are applied unevenly.

KT Gopalakrishnan





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DANGEROUS PRECEDENT

The US' capture of Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores in early January is historic ('America Regains Its Hemisphere', January 19, 2026). The US forces carried out a largescale operation in Caracas, removed a sitting head of state and flew him to New York to face federal charges—a move unseen in recent memory. This act has shaken global norms. It shows that powerful countries may now act far more freely, even across borders, under the banner of law enforcement or national interest. Legal experts and international bodies argue that this challenges basic principles of sovereignty and international law. The danger is real: if might increasingly dictates action, smaller nations and global stability could suffer. The world has crossed into unpredictable territory.

Abhishek Kumar

THE STRAY QUESTION

The Supreme Court's ongoing hearing on stray dogs forces a question that has been long avoided in public debate: How far should animal protection go when it begins to endanger human life? ('Leashing the Dogma', January 19, 2026)? India's stray dog crisis is no longer visible just on streets or in housing societies but even on court premises. A small but influential lobby has framed any recalibration of policy as cruelty while remaining insulated from the consequences of unchecked dog populations. Children who play outdoors, daily wage workers and the elderly pay the price. Compassion for animals is a civilised value, but civilisation also demands prioritising public safety. Laws that force humans to surrender movement, health and peace to violent strays confuse empathy with abdication of responsibility.

G Senthil Reddy

AI AS A PARTNER

AI is no longer a futuristic promise but is becoming an everyday partner in life and work ('The Agent Will See You Now', January 19, 2026). What began as chatbots that answered questions is evolving into agentic systems that act for us: booking trips, managing shopping and even coordinating calendars with minimal input. AI is also entering homes, with smart appliances that see, hear and adapt to our routines. Education, healthcare support and companionship tools are shifting from novelty to utility, helping learners and easing loneliness. Yet this transformation demands careful thought about ethics, privacy and human agency. As machines take on more roles, we must ensure they enhance, not diminish, our independence and well-being.

Pratik Jaiswal