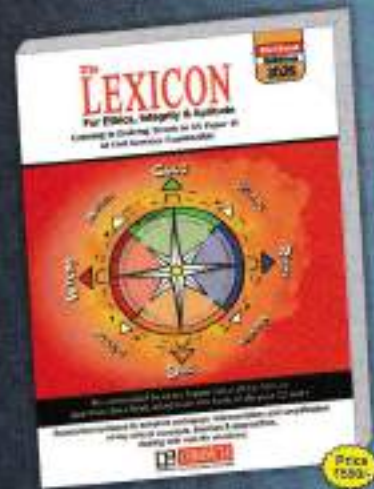


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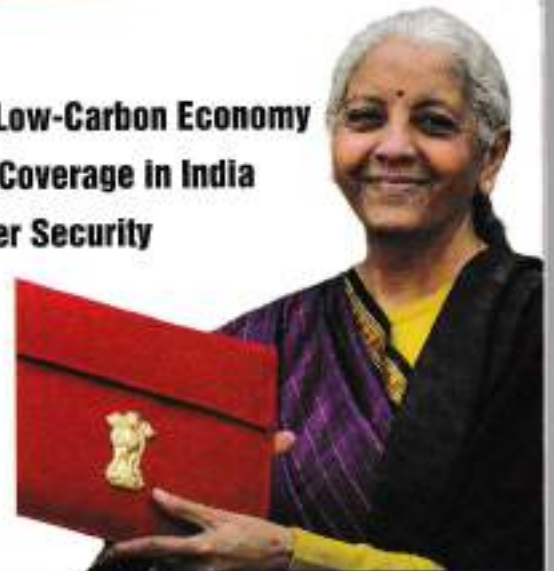
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- In this issue, we have presented 'Technology Special', a comprehensive compilation covering the latest scientific & technological developments.
- The content encapsulates relevant information in a concise, factual, and easy-to-remember format.
- Keeping in view the dynamic nature of the UPSC Civil Services Preliminary Examination, the content has been prepared with a completely exam-oriented strategy.
- In the selection of topics, priority has been accorded to those aspects that are directly linked with current trends of technological developments.

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Editor: N.N. Ojha

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Editorial: Mob. 9582948817, ccenglish@chronicleindia.in

Subscription: Mob. 9953007628, 9953007629, subscription@chronicleindia.in

Circulation: Mob. 9953007630, 9953007631, circulation@chronicleindia.in

Online Sales: Mob. 9582219047, onlinesale@chronicleindia.in

Advertisement: Mob. 9953007627, 9891601320, advt@chronicleindia.in

Corporate Office: Chronicle Publications (P) Ltd.

A-10, Sector 16, Noida-201301 (U.P.) Tel.: 0120-2514610

E-mail: info@chronicleindia.in

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Printed and Published by **Mrinal Ojha** for Chronicle Publications Pvt. Ltd. at H-31, Green Park Extn., First Floor, New Delhi- 110 016 and Printed at Impressions Printing and Packaging Limited, Plot No. C-18-19-20-21, Sector-59, Noida-201301 Editor - N.N. Ojha



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Zimbabwe's revival

After missing out on the 2024 World Cup, Sikandar Raza and his boys rebuilt to script a memorable comeback in this year's edition

Cover: Zimbabwe team (Getty Images)

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Poster: Shimron Hetmyer (AFP); Pages 45-52

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Published by Nirmala Lakshman, Kasturi Buildings, 85B, 86B, Anna Salai, Chennai-600 002 and Printed by SOT Rao at Kala Jyothi Process Private Ltd, Plot no CFC-1&2, Survey No 18, E-City, SEZ & General Industrial Park, Ravinyl & Srinagar (Village), Maheswaram(M), R.R.Dist, Telangana - 501359 on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., Chennai-600 002.

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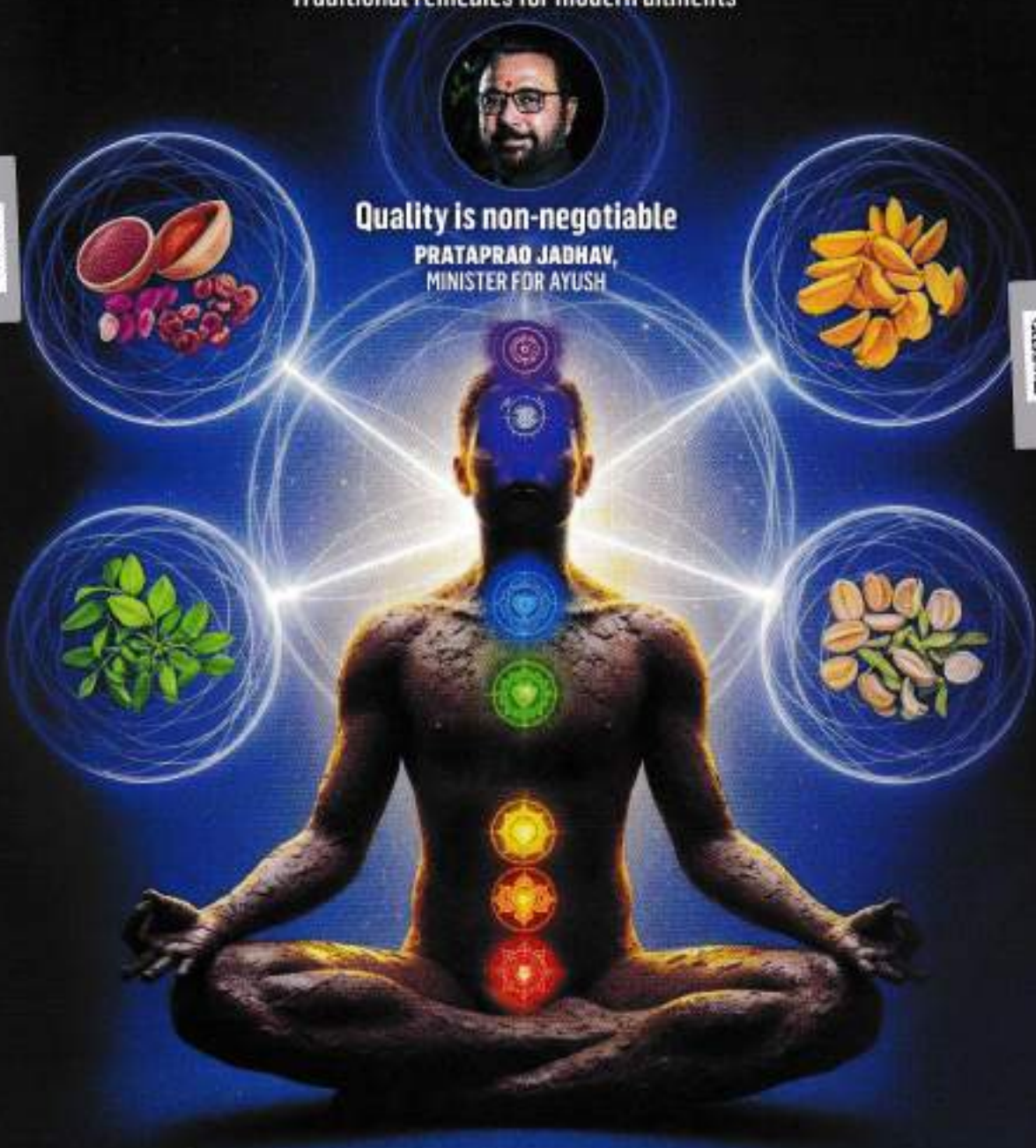
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MINISTER FOR AYUSH



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INDIA'S AYUSH MOMENT

Traditional systems of medicine in India today occupy a complex space between reverence and scepticism. The Union government is now crucially boosting the Ayush sector to integrate traditional medicine into mainstream health care. In the latest budget, the allocation to the Ayush ministry has been increased by nearly 20 per cent—from ₹3,671.82 crore in 2025-26 to ₹4,408.93 crore in 2026-27. And there is more to come.

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ASSAM

It is the BJP's welfare push and organisational strength versus an opposition alliance still taking shape

"Development will be our main issue"—**Pradan Baruah**, BJP MP



"The BJP's way is top-down, where people have no right to express their opinion"—**Gaurav Gogoi**, Congress president, Assam



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As Nitish Kumar steps aside, Bihar is likely to see a more competitive and uncertain political landscape

REUTERS





PHOTO: SHANTHARAJ

INTERVIEWS

- ❖ "For almost all existing diseases, we have medicines in Ayush, and people use them"—**Prataprao Jadhav**, Union minister of state for Ayush
- ❖ "Unani is increasingly becoming popular and is based on evidence-based innovation"—**Saiyad Shah Alam**, director, National Institute of Unani Medicine, Bengaluru
- ❖ **Homeopathy** is said to be managing certain disorders, but it is plagued by factors like lack of treatment protocols and research
- ❖ At the National Institute of **Siddha** in Chennai, an ancient system of healing is challenging our reliance on pills

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Ambassador Arun K. Singh: Iran war is already reshaping expectations—about American power and about the limits of military force in delivering political outcomes

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How comics influenced Krishand's globally themed, locally inventive cinema

COVER DESIGN BINESH SREEDHARAN



We are now among the world's five largest economies and, for several years, the fastest-growing among them. The India that once sloganeered alongside the "global south"—without corresponding influence—is no longer the India of today. The new India sits confidently at the global high table. It engages with multiple partners simultaneously, navigates complex rivalries with pragmatism, seeks outcomes rather than ovations, and has emerged as a true champion of the global south.

Printed at Malayala Manorama Press, Manorama Building, K.K. Road, Kottayam - 686 001, Kerala, and published from Manorama Building, K.K. Road, Kottayam - 686 001, Kerala, by Publisher and Printer **Jacob Mathew**, on behalf of the Malayala Manorama Company Private Ltd., Manorama Building, K.K. Road, Kottayam - 686 001, Kerala. Editor **Philip Mathew**, Manorama Buildings, Panampilly Nagar, Kochi - 682 036, Kerala. Place of Publication: Manorama Buildings, Panampilly Nagar, Kochi - 682036, Kerala.

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WOMEN'S DAY SPECIAL

IMPROVING WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH



Anju Bobby George



Akkai Padmashali



Neerja Birla



Jantvani Nilkan

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ALWAYS MIND HER

A woman in her 40s confronting reproductive pressure, a menopausal woman struggling with invisibility, a 17-year-old battling body image anxiety. Across India, her daughters are quietly fighting mental health battles shaped by biology, bias and burden. Sparked by conversations at the recent Mpowering Minds Summit 2026, THE WEEK examines the pressures and patterns stifling women and explores what it will take to dismantle the expectation of silent endurance

VOICES

- ◆ **Neerja Birla**, founder & chairperson, Aditya Birla Education Trust: Mental health checks should be embedded in the community health programme
- ◆ **Janhavi Nilekani**, founder and chairperson, Aastrika Foundation & Aastrika Midwifery Centre: After the applause over a newborn fades, who cares for the mother
- ◆ **Anju Bobby George**, Olympian: Support systems are crucial, as are backup plans
- ◆ **Akkai Padmashali**, transgender activist: Mental health is not a luxury; it is survival

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The Tamil Nadu Leadership Summit organised by THE WEEK brought together political leaders, policymakers, thinkers and innovators to exchange ideas, map the future and debate challenges before a young audience



Riyad Mathew, Chief Associate Editor & Director, THE WEEK, with Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi's silence seems strategic, shaped by ties with Arab states and the demographic makeup of Indian Muslims



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Criticism of policy is legitimate and often necessary, but broad indictments of institutional

integrity carry consequences that travel far beyond domestic contestation. When the Leader of the Opposition speaks abroad, he does so not as a private partisan but as a constitutional office bearer of the very system he criticises.



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In his memoir *Walk Like a Girl*, celebrated fashion designer **Prabal Gurung** explores identity, vulnerability and resilience



COVER PHOTOS BHANU PRAKASH CHANDRA
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Printed at Malayala Manorama Press, Manorama Building, K.K. Road, Kottayam - 686 001, Kerala, and published from Manorama Building, K.K. Road, Kottayam - 686 001, Kerala, by Publisher and Printer Jacob Mathew, on behalf of the Malayala Manorama Company Private Ltd., Manorama Building, K.K. Road, Kottayam - 686 001, Kerala. Editor Philip Mathew, Manorama Buildings, Panampilly Nagar, Kochi - 682 036, Kerala. Place of Publication: Manorama Buildings, Panampilly Nagar, Kochi - 682036, Kerala.

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THE AI THREAT

**INDIA'S IT OUTSOURCING MODEL IS FACING AN
EXISTENTIAL CRISIS, BUT BIG INVESTMENTS IN AI COULD
HELP THE SECTOR WEATHER THE STORM**

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DR ZIAUDDIN HYDER
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KIREN RIJOU
UNION MINISTER

M.K. NARAYANAN
FORMER NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER

M.J. AKBAR
FORMER UNION MINISTER

Bangladesh Prime Minister
Tarique Rahman



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NEW ERA, NEW HOPES

With a new government in place in Bangladesh, India has a cautious chance to rebuild trust, while also gaining room for a more steady and wide-ranging engagement

INTERVIEWS:



- ▶ India and Bangladesh share deep historical, cultural, economical and educational ties. At the same time, certain unresolved issues remain
—**Dr Ziauddin Hyder**, adviser to Tarique Rahman, prime minister



- ▶ The Siliguri corridor is well protected, and our formations there are formidable
—**Kiren Rijiju**, Union minister

Supporters of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party celebrate the party's poll victory in front of a banner with Tarique Rahman's photo in Dhaka



PLUS:

- ▶ Bangladesh can progress, if its leadership displays the necessary sagacity —**M.J. Akbar**, author and former Union minister
- ▶ Preventing Bangladesh from being drawn into the Islamist revolution is vital for India —**M.K. Narayanan**, former national security adviser

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It beggars belief that not only does

Hardeep Singh Puri fail to realise his responsibility to protect our country from his association with a convicted pedophile but that he lies and gaslights anyone who points this out to him. He owes it to the nation to apologise and resign.

KRISHNA NAIR



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From a Delhi workshop owner to a Mumbai poet, people who are still in love with the typewriter

COVER DESIGN BINESH SREEDHARAN; COVER PHOTO APP

Printed at Malayala Manorama Press, Manorama Building, K.K. Road, Kottayam - 686 001, Kerala, and published from Manorama Building, K.K. Road, Kottayam - 686 001, Kerala, by Publisher and Printer **Jacob Mathew**, on behalf of the Malayala Manorama Company Private Ltd., Manorama Building, K.K. Road, Kottayam - 686 001, Kerala. Editor **Philip Mathew**, Manorama Buildings, Panampilly Nagar, Kochi - 682 036, Kerala. Place of Publication: Manorama Buildings, Panampilly Nagar, Kochi - 682036, Kerala. • Focus/Infocus features are paid marketing/PR initiatives

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• RAJAT VERMA, MD & CEO, DBS BANK INDIA • SHAKTIKANTA DAS, FORMER GOVERNOR, RBI

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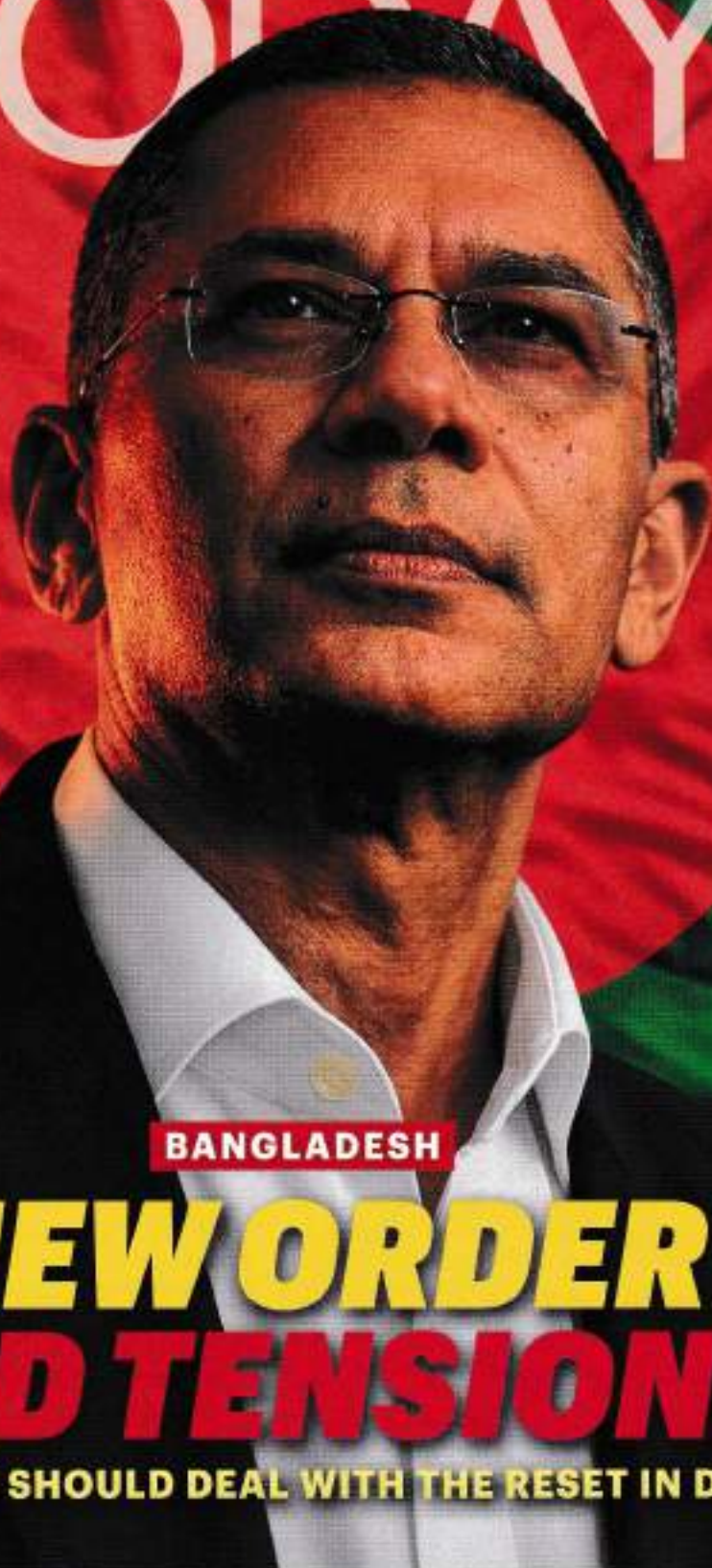
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INDIA TODAY GROUP

Volume 51-Number 8: For the week

February 24-March 2, 2016, published on every Friday

• Editorial Corporate Office: Living Media India Ltd., India Today Group

Madhapur, IT-C, Sector-44A, Fly City, Noida - 201301; Phone: 0120-4667100

• Subscription: For assistance, contact, email: irc@indiatoday.com

Phone / WhatsApp: +91 8867 778 778 (Monday to Saturday, 9.30am - 5.30pm)

• Sales: Direct all trade enquiries to General Manager (Sales), Living Media India

Group, C-6, Sector-16, Noida-201301 (I.P.)

• Regd. Office: F-26, First Floor, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110008

• Import Office: 1208, 12th Floor, Tower 2/A, One World Plaza, Gurgaon,

Delhi-122001; S.R. Mangal, Lower Floor (West), Mandir-400014;

Phone: 022 6026455; Fax: 6506026

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House, Peshawar, Office C/1, Road, Alandahad-020000; Phone: 06160708,

2550023; Fax: 2550100 • Copyright Living Media India Ltd. All rights

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Printed and published by Manoj Sharma on behalf of Living Media

India Limited, Printed at Thomson Press India Private Limited,

14-45 Milestone, Delhi Mathura Road, Faridabad-121007, (Haryana)

and at Brijwan Enterprises, 134, Industrial Town, 4th Main Road, Bangalore,

Bengaluru-560044, (Karnataka).

Published at F-26, First Floor, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110008.

Editor: Raj Choudhary.

www.indiatoday.com take the responsibility for retaining needed publications material.

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Illustration: An aerial view of a Middle Eastern conflict zone. The sky is filled with fighter jets, missiles, and explosions. Thick black smoke billows from the ground. Labels for Israel, Iran, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and UAE are scattered across the scene. At the bottom, portraits of Joe Biden, Donald Trump, Ayatollah Khamenei, and Narendra Modi are shown against a dark, smoky background.

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Dasyu-Sundari
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 Loose-Woman
 Temptress

Femme Fatale

Phoolan was Devi for people who wanted to give her cultural and narrative justice. For others, she was reduced to a vengeful, bloodthirsty woman. The newsrooms framed her as a seductress and were almost disappointed when they saw her, a small woman with wild hair. We rewrite some of these stories to challenge the narrative shaped by the male gaze in the media on women and violence

RW NO. 7044/1961



8904130800010 07

Volume LXVI, No. 7

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Printed and published by Indrani Ray on

behalf of Outlook Publishing (P) Pvt. Ltd.

Editor: Chinki Sinha. Printed at MP Printers

(A Unit of DP Corp Ltd B-201, Phase-II,

Noida-201305, Gautam Buddha Nagar (UP)

and published from A8-10, S.I. Enclave,

New Delhi-110 029

Published for the period of

March 2-11, 2026

Released on March 1, 2026

Total number of pages 106 including covers



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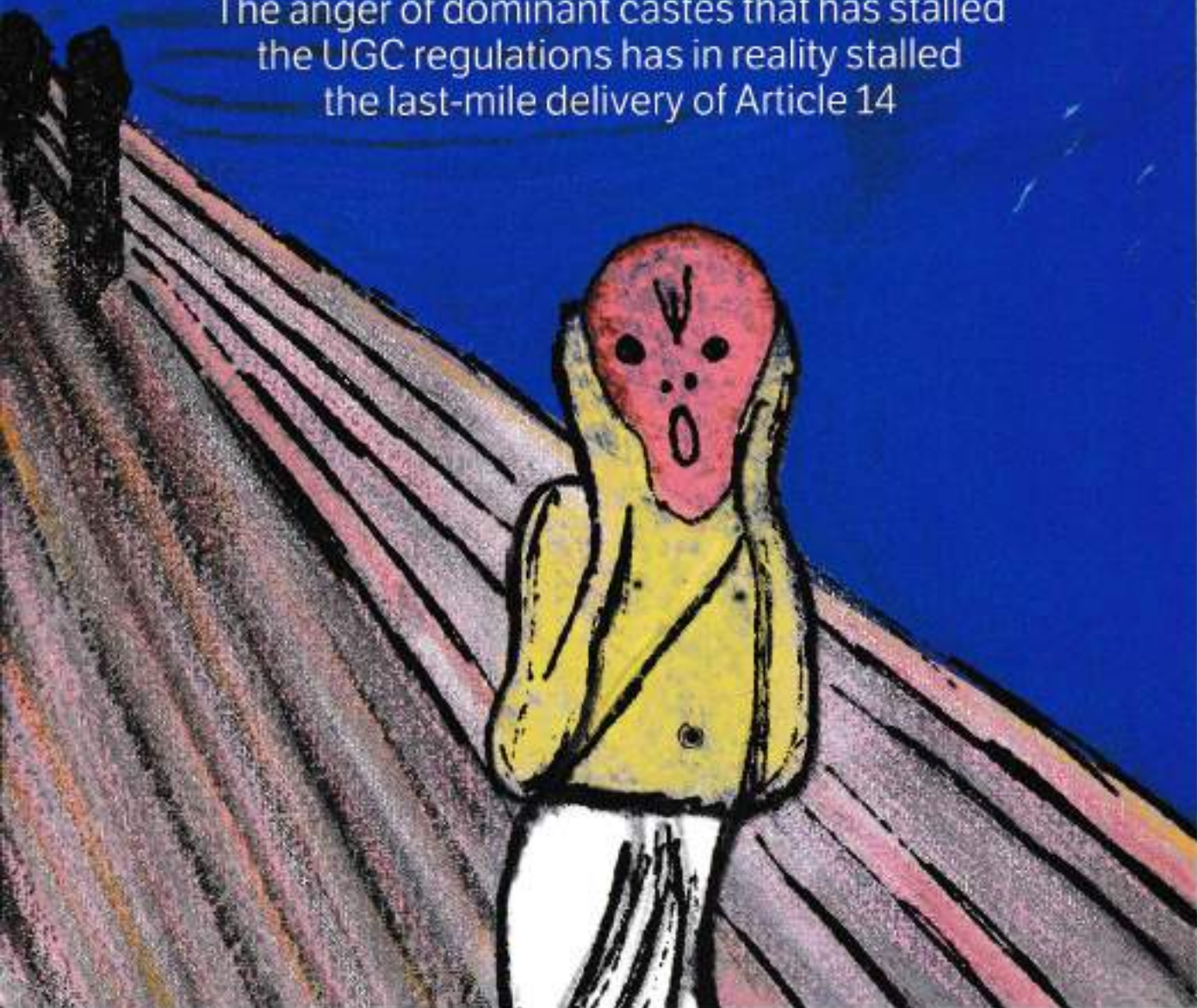
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Yojana (English):

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Number of pages: 52

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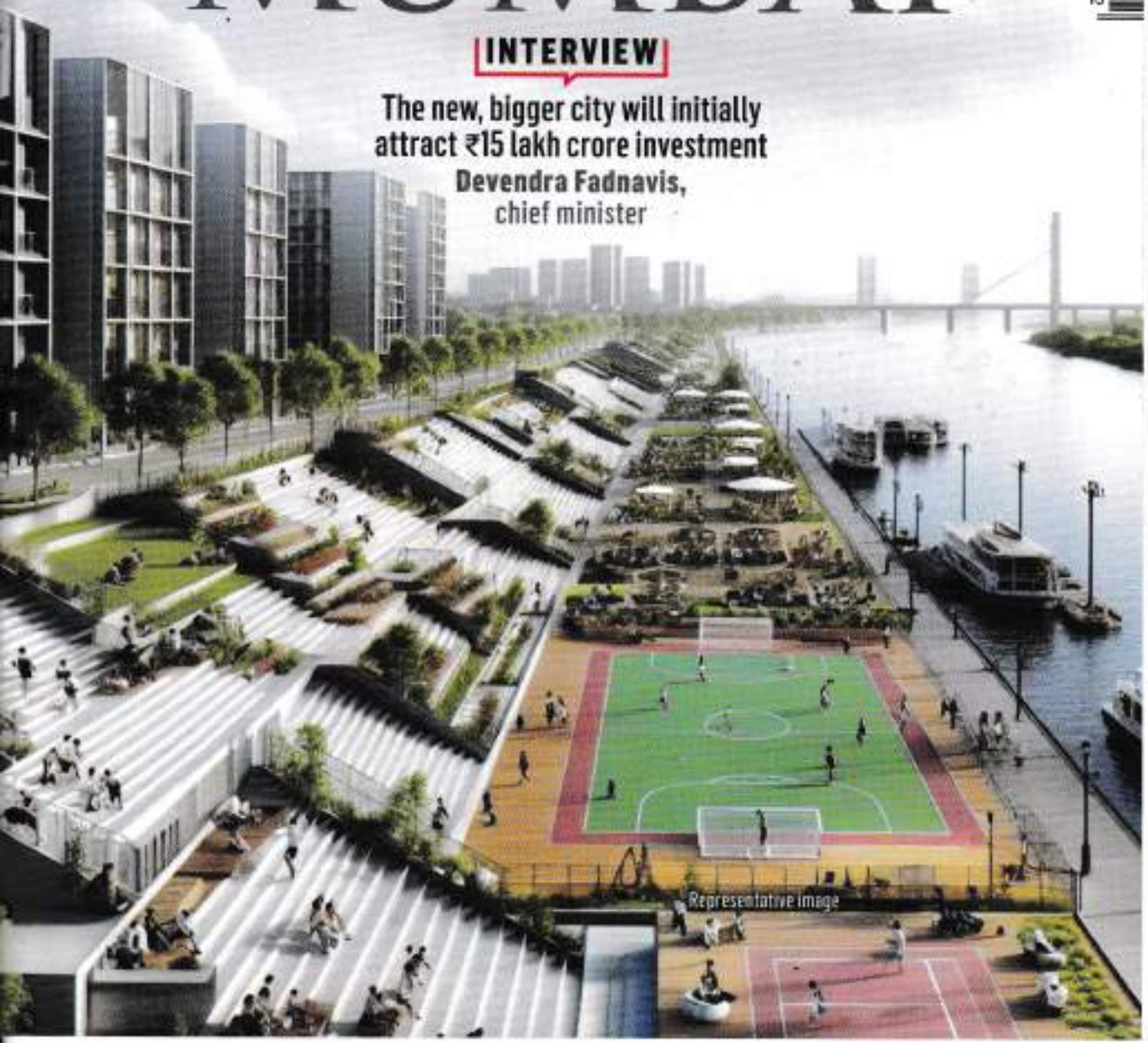
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COVER IMAGE CIDCO
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Printed at Malayala Manorama Press, Manorama Building, K.K. Road, Kottayam - 686 001, Kerala, and published from Manorama Building, K.K. Road, Kottayam - 686 001, Kerala, by Publisher and Printer Jacob Mathew, on behalf of the Malayala Manorama Company Private Ltd., Manorama Building, K.K. Road, Kottayam - 686 001, Kerala. Editor Philip Mathew, Manorama Buildings, Panampilly Nagar, Kochi - 682 036, Kerala. Place of Publication: Manorama Buildings, Panampilly Nagar, Kochi - 682036, Kerala.

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REGISTRATION NO. DL/00/1/2022-23/14, C.O. NO. 3855/2023 REGISTERED IN DL/00/1/2022-23/14, C.O. NO. 3855/2023

Printed at: The India Today Group, 11, Connaught Place, New Delhi - 110028. Phone: 011-26101234. Fax: 011-26101235. Email: info@indiatoday.in

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INDIA'S AI LEAP

HOW INDIA'S FIRST SOVEREIGN MODEL CAN
GIVE IT AN EDGE IN THE AGE OF AI

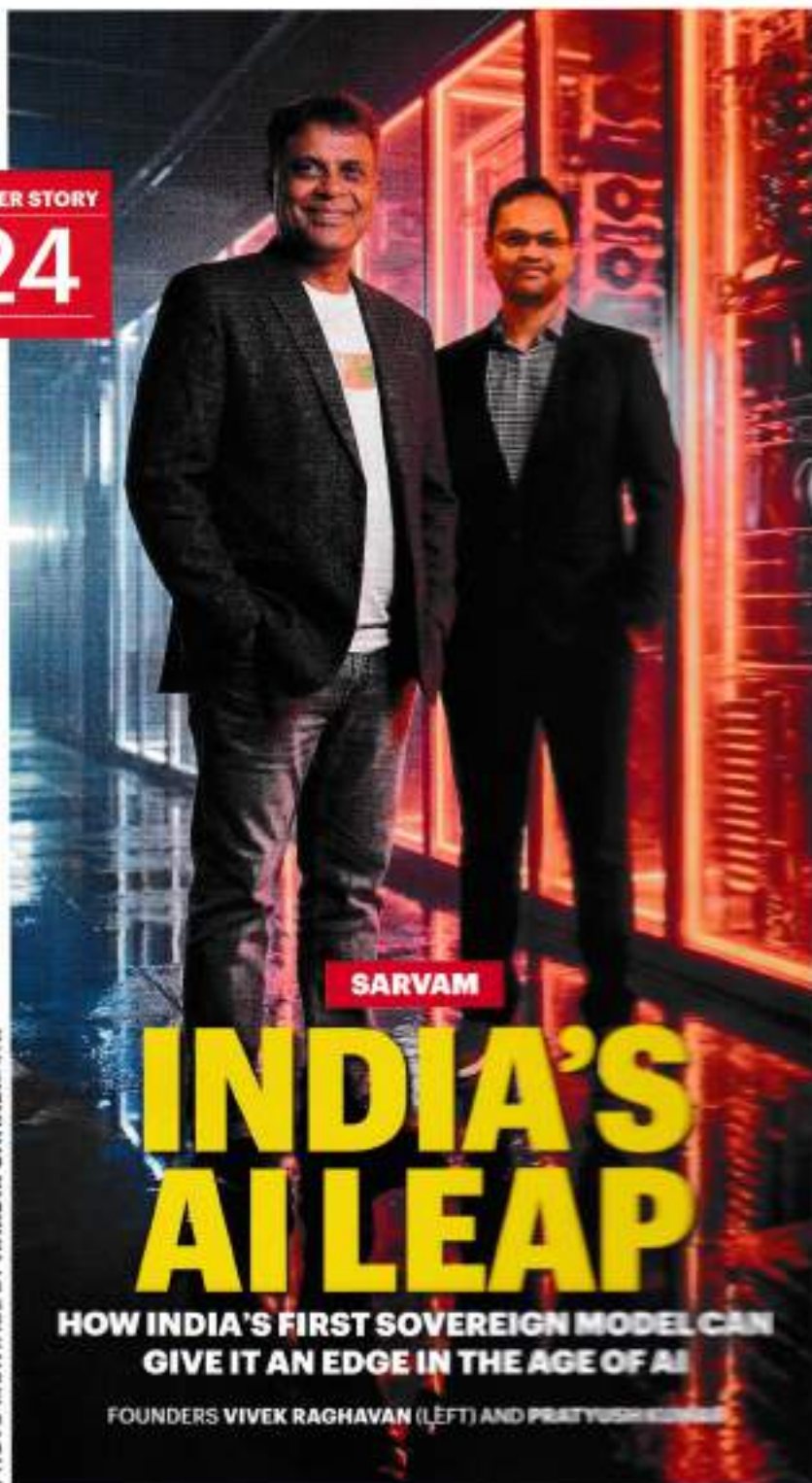
FOUNDERS VIVEK RAGHAVAN (LEFT) AND PRATYUSH KUMAR

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INDIA'S AI LEAP

HOW INDIA'S FIRST SOVEREIGN MODEL CAN
GIVE IT AN EDGE IN THE AGE OF AI

FOUNDERS VIVEK RAGHAVAN (LEFT) AND PRATYUSH KULKARNI

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BW AI IMPACT 100

Leaders positioning India
among the global AI elite

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THE GREAT NICOBAR CONTROVERSY

**AS THE NGT CLEARS THE ₹81,000 CRORE PORT AND
DEFENCE PROJECT, ECOLOGISTS FEAR THE LOSS OF THE
ISLAND'S UNIQUE BIODIVERSITY**

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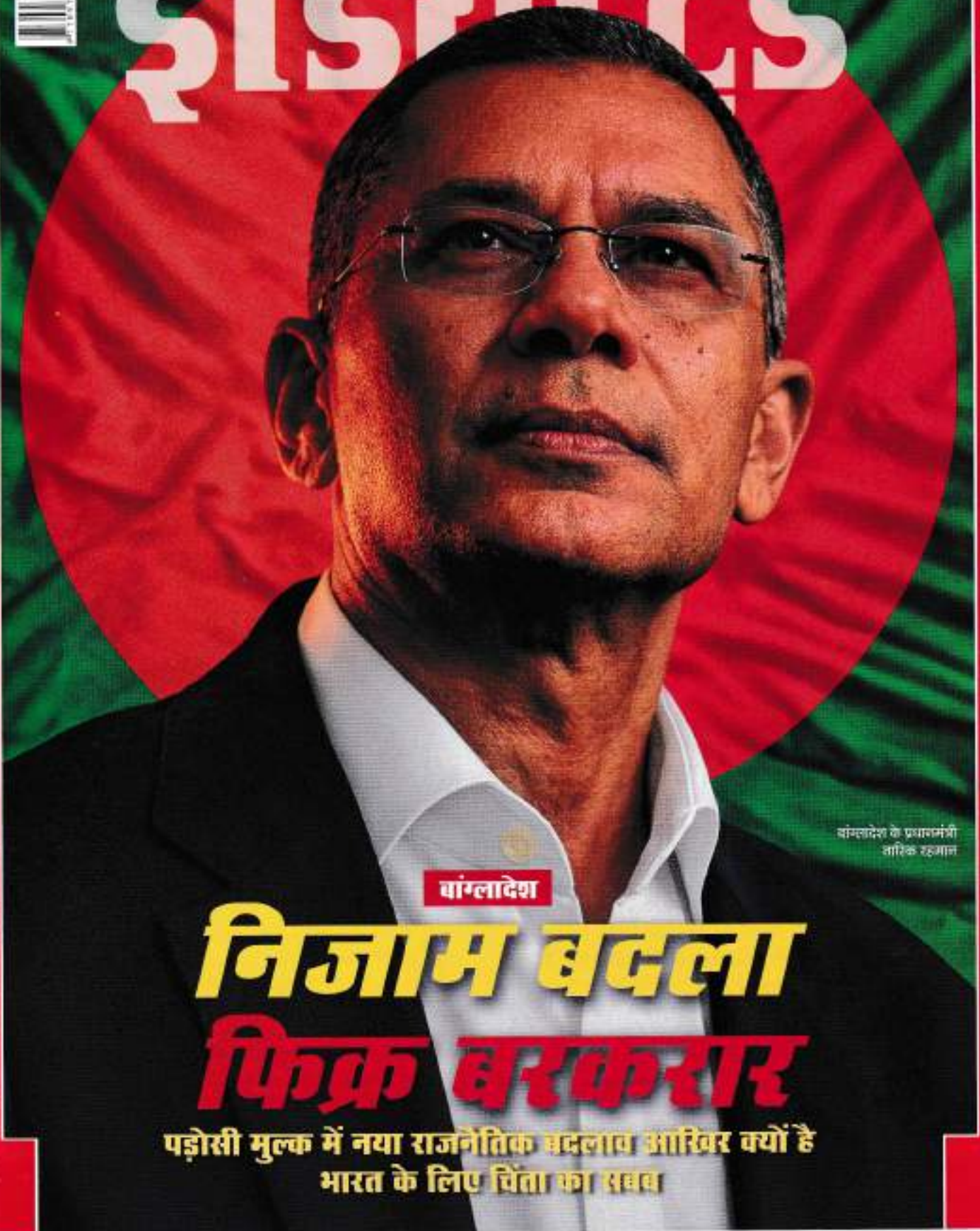
March 8-9, 2026, published on every Friday

• Editorial/Corporate Office Living Media India Ltd., India Today Group, Madhya, FC-5, Sector-10A, Plot No. 10A, New Delhi - 110016. Phone: 011-26060000
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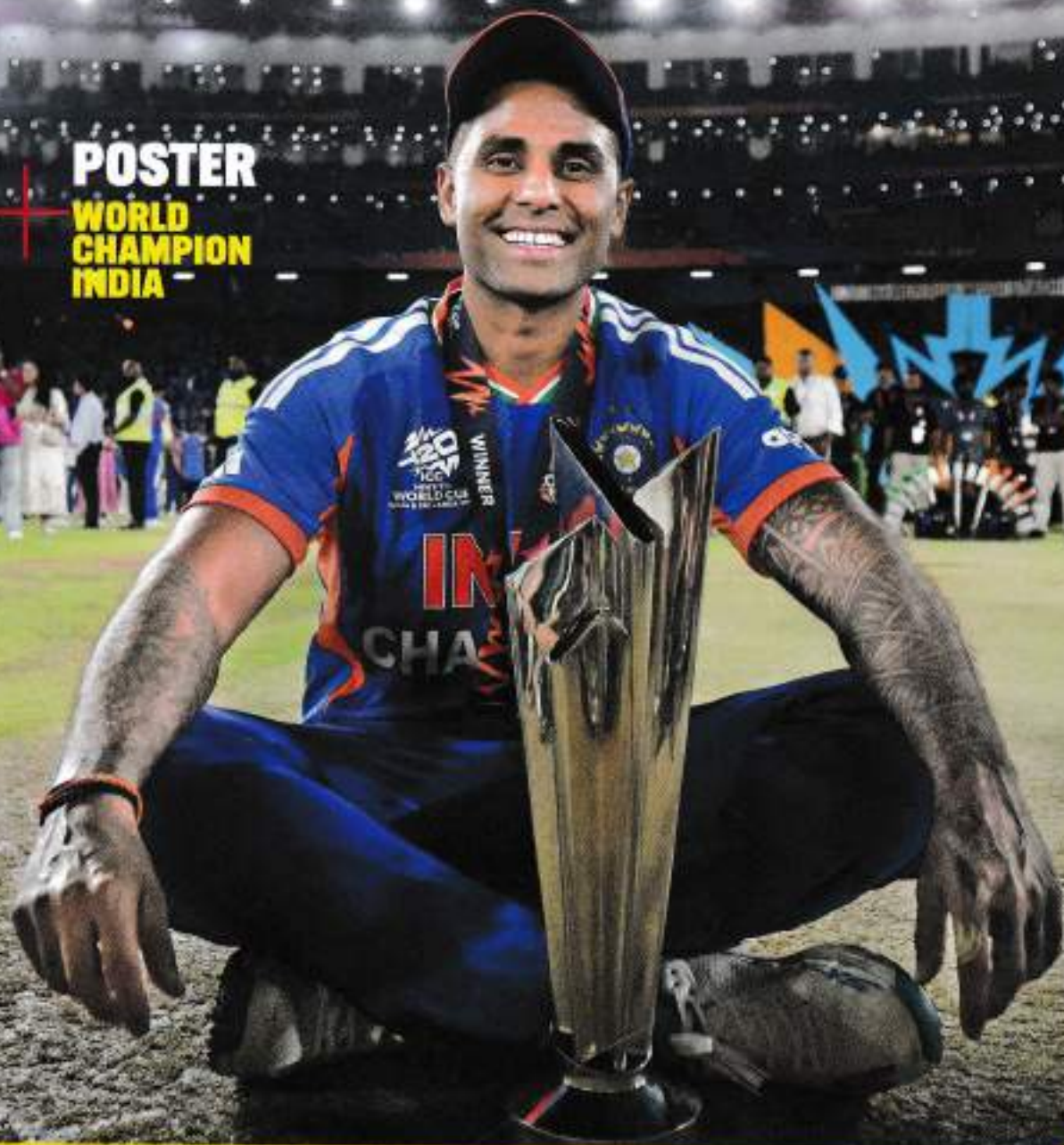
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MAN WITH A PLAN

Skipper Suryakumar Yadav's calm demeanour, tactful bowling changes and backing of talent were pivotal to India's T20 World Cup title defence



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T20 World Cup 2026
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of the Tournament



T20 World Cup

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Every time a match threatens to unravel, Jasprit Bumrah, India's quietest warrior, will be the first to step up



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T20 World Cup

A fearless and formidable India clinched its third T20 World Cup title and fifth across formats

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BCCI President Mithun Manhas says J & K's victory is also about creating an identity and giving young cricketers in the region a pathway that didn't exist before
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COVER PICS:

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Poster: Indian World Cup team (Emmanuel Yogini); Pages 53-60

www.sportstar.thehindu.com
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Published by Nirmala Lakshman, Kasturi Buildings, 859, 860, Anna Salai, Chennai-600 002 and Printed by SDT Rao at Kala Jyothi Process Private Ltd, Plot no CFC-1&2, Survey No 18, E-City, SE2 & General Industrial Park, Ravivajal & Srinagar (Village), Maheswaram(M), R.R.Dist, Telangana - 501359 on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., Chennai-600 002.

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THE WEEK



V.D. Satheesan

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS
**CAN HE
WIN
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FOR
CONGRESS?**

PLUS

**MY DREAMS
FOR KERALA**
by Shashi Tharoor

INTERVIEWS

CPI(M) General Secretary **M.A. BABY**

Leader of Opposition **V.D. SATHEESAN**

BJP State President **RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR**

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Rajeev Chandrasekhar



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TRACKING KERALA'S PULSE

All three political fronts in Kerala—the UDF, the LDF and the NDA—are invoking the promise of “new”. As the state heads to polls, the real contest is not just about who will govern next, but whose idea of change the electorate will clasp to their bosom.

PLUS

- What Kerala needs today is a decisive break from the politics of obstructionism—**Shashi Tharoor**, Congress MP



INTERVIEWS

- “CPI(M) travelling on the same path as the BJP”—**V.D. Satheesan**, leader of opposition, Kerala
- “Political collaboration between the BJP and the UDF can be demonstrated both arithmetically and historically”—**M.A. Baby**, general secretary, CPI(M)
- “When people in positions of political power try to harm people who simply want to practise their faith, the BJP steps in to protect them”—**Rajeev Chandrasekhar**, BJP state president

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VB-G RAM G provides the legal, technological and institutional foundation to ensure that rural transformation is inclusive, measurable and durable—**Shivraj Singh Chouhan**, Union minister



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IRAN

With no nuclear arms and a few inaccurate missiles, Iran no longer poses a threat; but will Trump and Netanyahu be wise enough to quit the war now?



AFP

PLUS

India has choices to protect its energy needs, but a long war in the Middle East may throw its plans off course

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T20 WORLD CUP

Having won consecutive T20 World Cups, India now look for white-ball invincibility



SALIL REDA



The lesson the Shahed offers is not merely financial—about *paisa-vasool* ratios. It is also moral. Because

every time the tiny heroic drone from a besieged and bleeding 5,000-year-old civilisation hits an American interceptor, it demonstrates that it is possible to stand up to stupid, greedy, selfish hypocrites with their bloated finger on the nuclear button.

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In a surprise collection of new songs that feel raw and rushed, U2 find their fire in the Trump era



SHUTTERSTOCK

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COVER DESIGN BINESH SREEDHARAN

Printed at Malayala Manorama Press, Manorama Building, K.K. Road, Kottayam - 686 001, Kerala, and published from Manorama Building, K.K. Road, Kottayam - 686 001, Kerala, by Publisher and Printer **Jacob Mathew**, on behalf of the Malayala Manorama Company Private Ltd., Manorama Building, K.K. Road, Kottayam - 686 001, Kerala. Editor **Philip Mathew**, Manorama Buildings, Panampilly Nagar, Kochi - 682 036, Kerala. Place of Publication: Manorama Buildings, Panampilly Nagar, Kochi - 682036, Kerala.

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604 Prabhzi Kiran,

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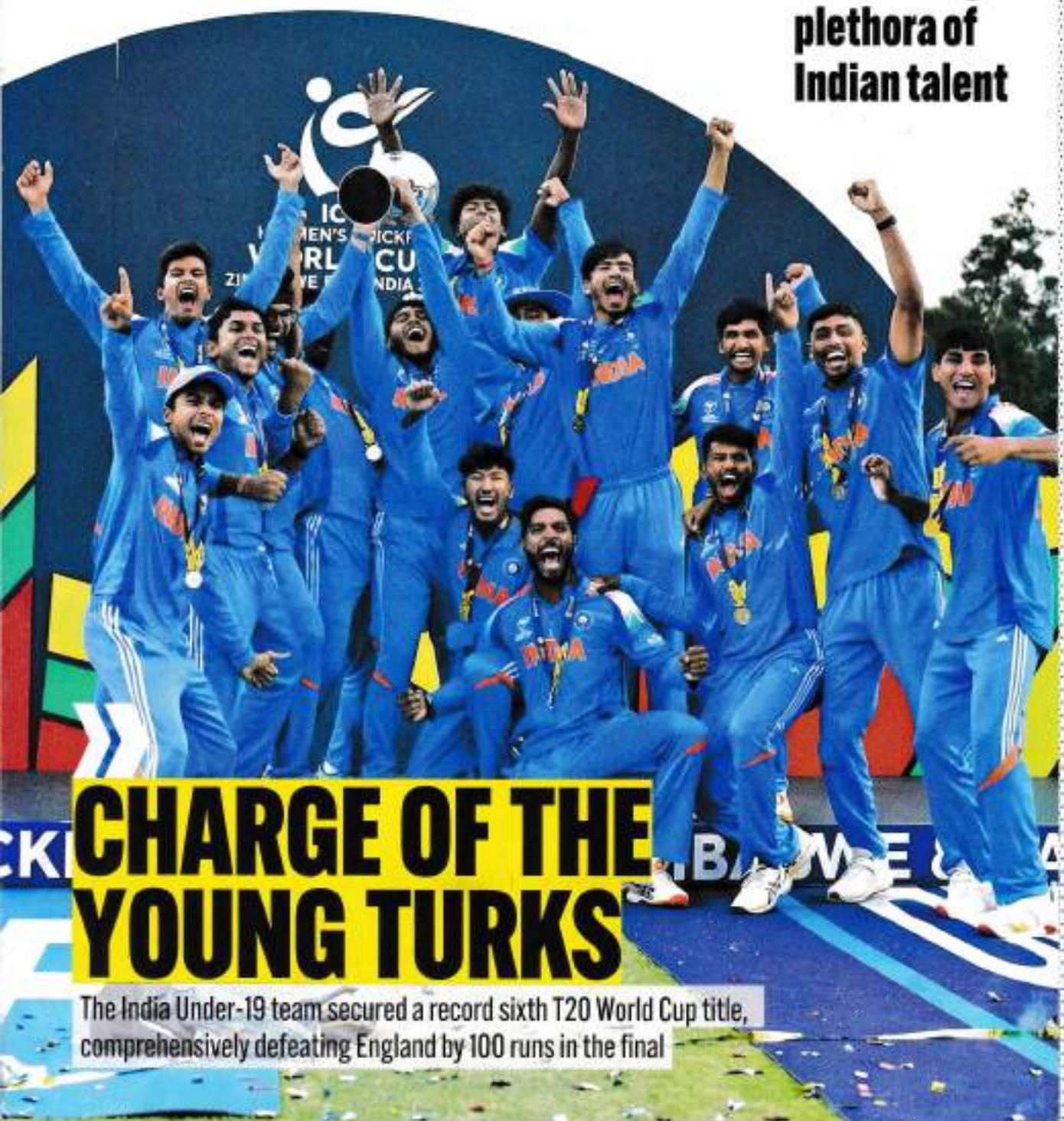
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WPL SEASON 4

**Unearthing a
plethora of
Indian talent**



CHARGE OF THE YOUNG TURKS

The India Under-19 team secured a record sixth T20 World Cup title, comprehensively defeating England by 100 runs in the final



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Under-19 World Cup

Victory, a launchpad for junior cricketers to take the step towards the big stage

Cover: India Under-19 team (AP)

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Poster: Carlos Alcaraz (Getty Images); Pages 43-50

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Published by Nirmala Lakshman, Kasturi Buildings, 85B, 85D, Anna Salai, Chennai-600 002 and Printed by SOT Rao at Kala Jyothi Process Private Ltd, Plot no CRC-14&2, Survey No 18, E-City, SE2 & General Industrial Park, Ravivryal & Srinagar (Village), Meheworam(M), R.U.Dist, Telangana - 501359 on behalf of THE PUBLISHING PVT LTD., Chennai-600 002.

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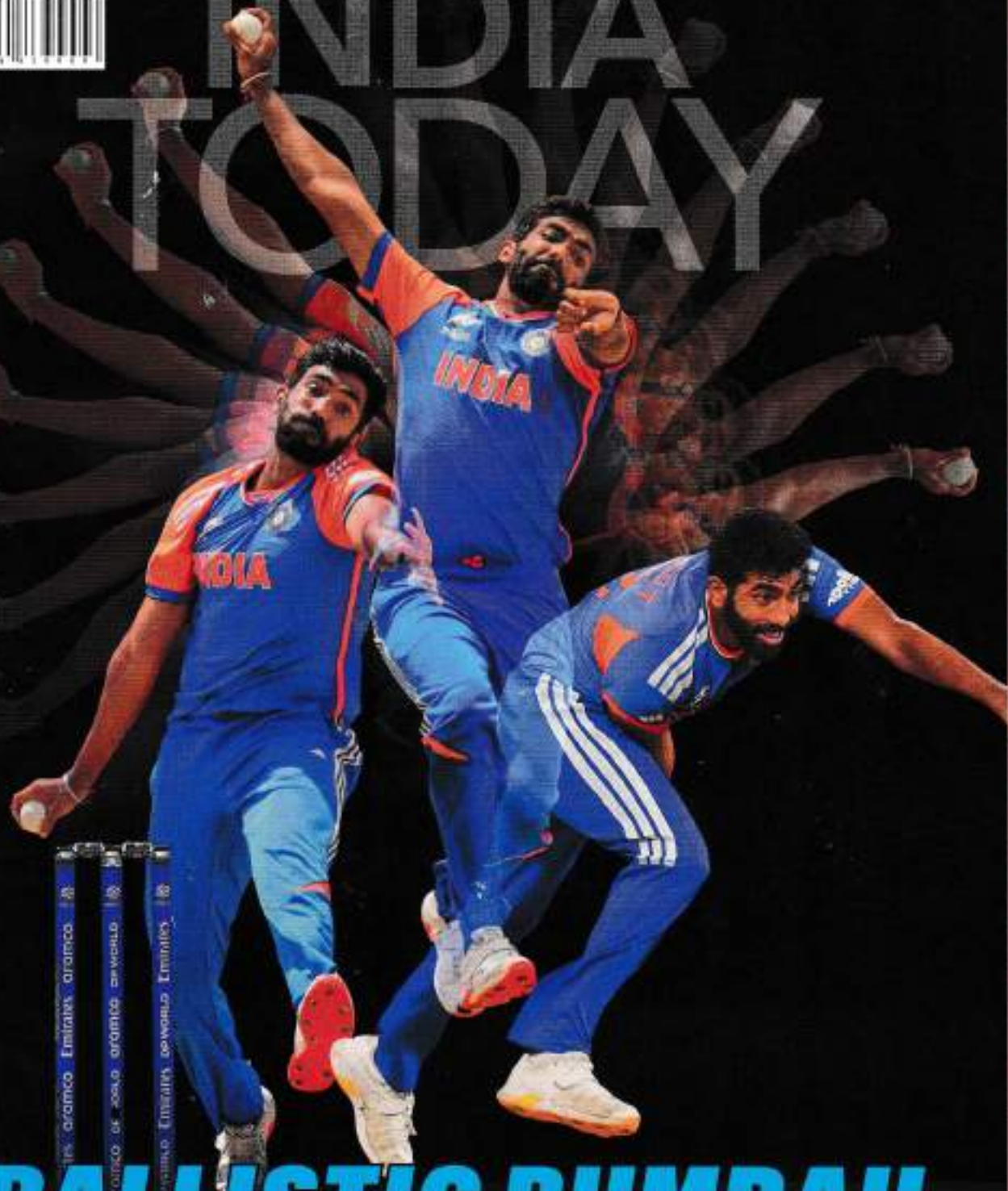
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WAR OF THE W

UNITED STATES

\$890 mn approx.
Military cost per day

[The US has fired over 2,000 missiles and drones at Iran]

LUCAS

Low-cost kamikaze drones based on the Iranian Shahed

Cost per unit: \$35,000

TOMAHAWK CRUISE MISSILE

Ship/ submarine-launched for standoff strikes

Cost per unit: \$1.5-2 million

PRECISION STRIKE MISSILE (PRSM)

Anti-ship/ anti-radiation seeker used from HIMARS mobile rocket launchers

Cost per unit: \$1.6 million

JOINT AIR-TO-SURFACE STANDOFF MISSILE (JASSM)

Air-launched cruise missile

Cost per unit: \$1.3 million

AIR DEFENCE

PATRIOT (MIM-104)

Surface-to-air system against short-range missiles and aircraft

Cost per interceptor missile: \$3-4 million

MEROPS INTERCEPTOR DRONE

Anti-drone system, deployed against Iranian Shaheds. Low-cost counter to cheap drones

Cost per unit: \$50,000 approx.

THAAD (TERMINAL HIGH ALTITUDE AREA DEFENSE)

Anti-ballistic missile system. High-altitude intercepts

Cost per interceptor missile: \$9-15 million

Graphic by NILANJAN DAS & TANMOY CHAKRABORTY
Text by PRADIP R. SAGAR



ISRAEL

\$590 mn – \$725 mn
Military cost per day

[Over 6,500 Israeli missiles and drones have struck Iran]

DELILAH, RAMPAGE, ROCKS, BLACK SPARROW

All air-launched ballistic missiles

Cost per unit: \$5-10million

HERMES 900 DRONES

Long-endurance strike drones

Cost per unit: \$5-10 million

HAROP DRONES

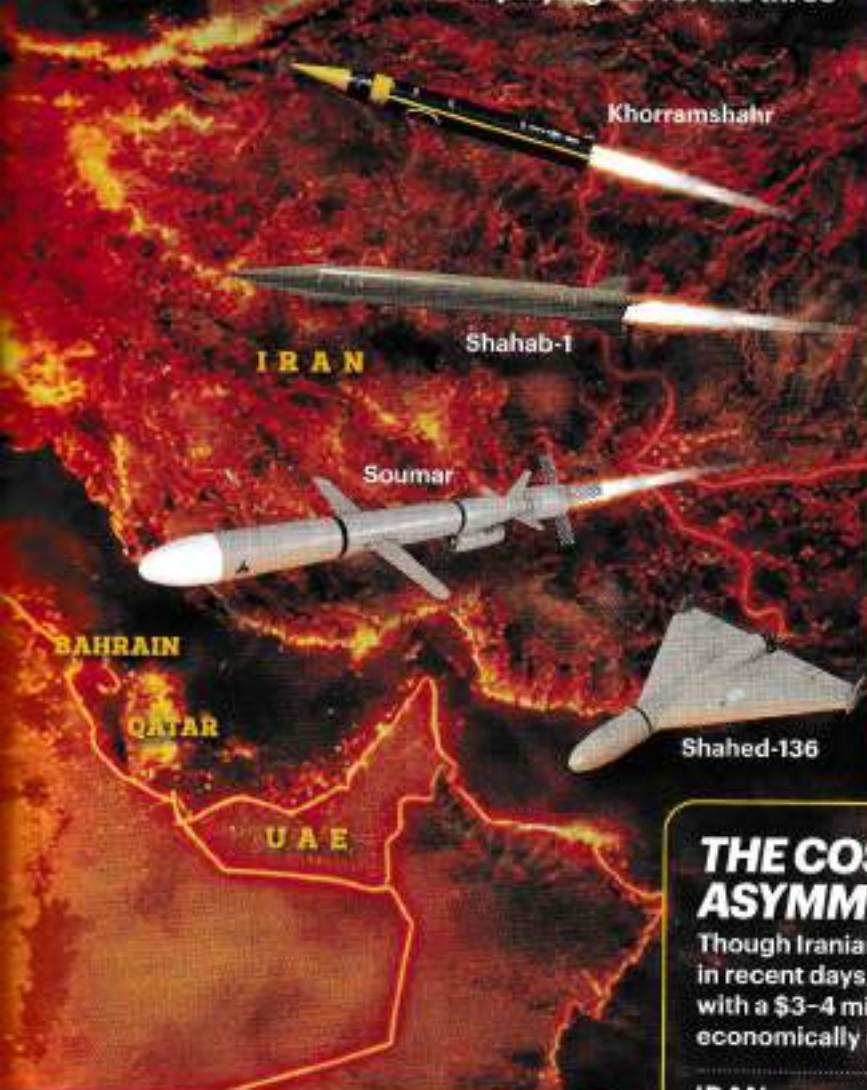
Loitering munitions/ kamikaze drones

Cost per unit: \$700,000 approx.



WAR CHESTS

With the conflict in West Asia completing its second week, it is pertinent to look at the enormous costs incurred by Israel, the US and Iran. Across platforms most used, here's how the cost war is playing out for the three



IRAN

\$200 mn – \$250 mn

Military cost per day

[Iran has fired over 3,000 missiles and drones towards Israel, US/ Gulf assets, ships]

KHORRAMSHAHR, FATAH, SHAHAB-3, GHADR-1

Medium-range ballistic missiles

Cost per unit: \$1-2 million

ZOLFAGHAR, TONDAR 69, QIAM-1, SHAHAB-1

Short-range ballistic missiles

Cost per unit: \$500,000-1 million

SOUMAR, HOVEYZEH, JK-2 ANTI-SHIP MISSILE

Submarine/ ground-launched cruise missiles

Cost per unit: \$200,000-\$500,000

SHAHED-136

One-way attack drone armed with 50 kg warhead

Cost per unit: \$20,000-\$50,000

AIR DEFENCE

IRON DOME

Anti-missile defence system made of short-range interceptor missiles for rockets/ drones

Cost per interceptor missile: \$50,000 approx.

ARROW

Long-range anti-ballistic missile defence

Cost per interceptor missile: \$2-3 mn approx.



THE COST-BENEFIT ASYMMETRY

Though Iranian missile/ drone launches have reduced in recent days, destroying a \$20,000-\$50,000 drone with a \$3-4 million US/ Israeli interceptor missile is economically inefficient

IRAN

Cost of a Shahed drone

\$20,000-\$50,000

Cost of ballistic/ cruise missiles

\$0.5-\$2 mn

US/ ISRAEL

Cost of a Patriot interceptor missile

\$3-4 mn

Cost of a THAAD interceptor missile

\$15 mn+

Cost of an Iron Dome interceptor missile

\$50,000

Cost of an Arrow interceptor missile

\$2-3 mn

THE SOLUTION: Emulate Ukraine, which has developed low-cost counter-drone systems, including interceptor drones costing only a few thousand dollars, to counter Russian drone attacks, often using Iran-made machines

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How two reckless men have taken us
to the edge of a third world war

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COVER STORY

The merchants of war

10/ After the US-Israel attacks on Iran and its retaliatory strikes across West Asia, the region's illusion of being an island of stability lies shattered. The long shadow of war now looms over potentially every capital in the neighbourhood.

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