

AUGUST 2024  
A JOURNAL OF POLITICS  
AND CULTURE

*Serving judges named  
in MP exam scam p.50*

*India's failure to  
control tuberculosis p.42*

₹250

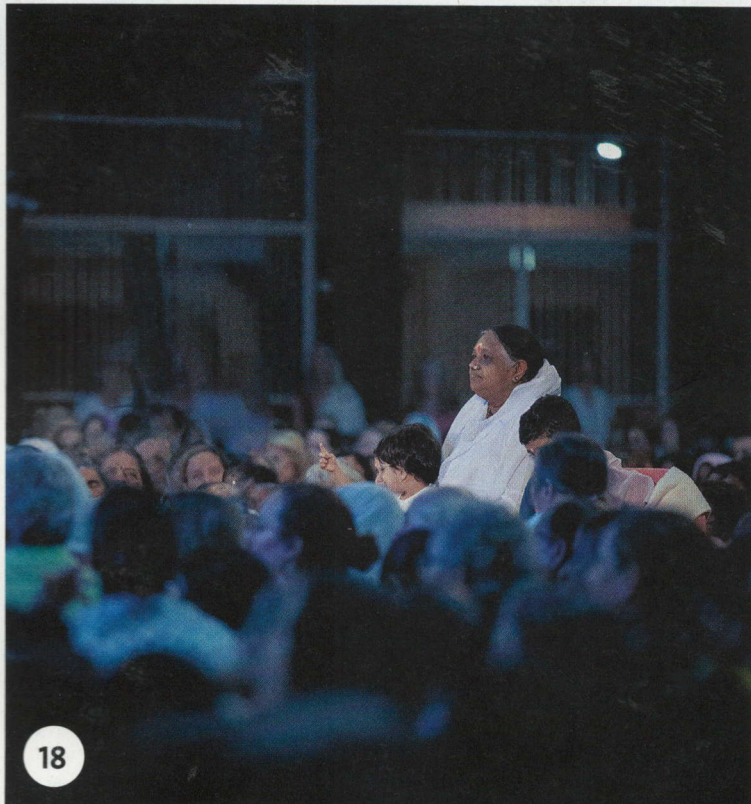
# THE CARAVAN



THE GODMOTHER

Amritanandamayi's  
empire of secrets





18



COVER STORY / RELIGION

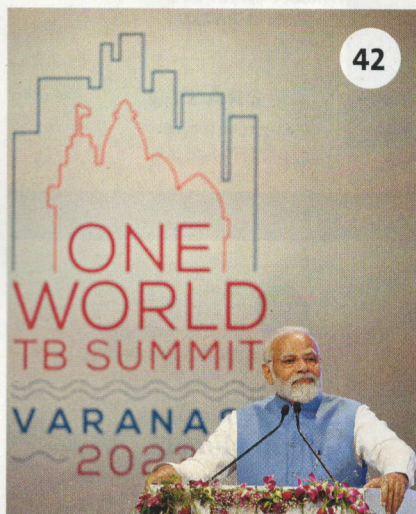
18

## The Godmother

Amritanandamayi's empire of secrets

AATHIRA KONIKKARA

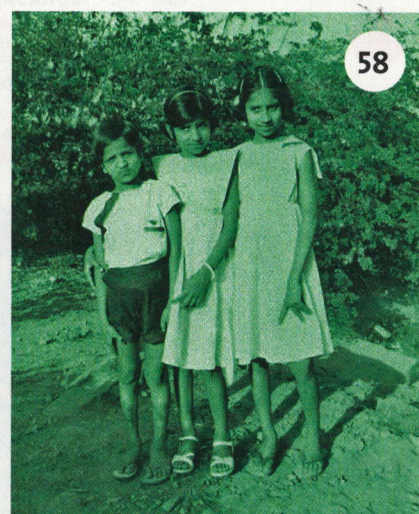
Amritanandamayi's claim to fame is not her oratory or the stories of her miracles—though there are quite a few of those. Her signature act is the embrace that she offers to her devotees, a ritual that earned her the moniker “the hugging saint.” Thanks to an impressive public-relations team, extensive political support and a compliant Malayalam media, the popular perception of Amritanandamayi is that of a benevolent figure. But several devotees who interacted closely with her have witnessed a different, often frightening side, describing her as someone money-minded and controlling, prone to fits of rage, and hostile to criticism. For many, her ashram became a gloomy, isolating environment in which they suffered severe mental-health crises and felt trapped. There have been at least two mysterious deaths and several suicides—all of which have gone without adequate investigations, and which the ashram has been dismissive about.



42



50



58



HEALTH

### 42 Death by Policy

The Modi government's catastrophic failure to control tuberculosis

VIDYA KRISHNAN



LAW

### 50 “Vyapam-like Scam”

Five Madhya Pradesh judges named in exam fraud report continue to serve in district courts

NILEENA MS



COMMUNITIES

### 58 When I Heard My Hands Talk

Navigating life as a Child of Deaf Adults

ANANTA JAIN



THE LEDE

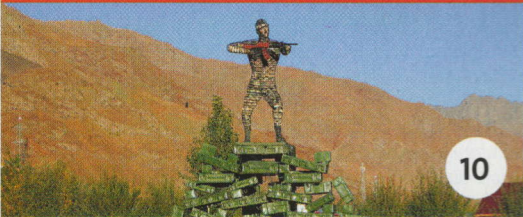


HEALTH

**8 Out of Order**

The many challenges sanitation workers face  
**DIMPLE BEHAL**

PERSPECTIVES



SECURITY

**10 Padded Account**

Kargil, a war in which accountability lost  
**SUSHANT SINGH**



POLITICS

**13 Righting the Ship**

What the INDIA should, or should not, learn from elections in Europe  
**AJACHI CHAKRABARTI**



THE BOOKSHELF

96

EDITOR'S PICK

98

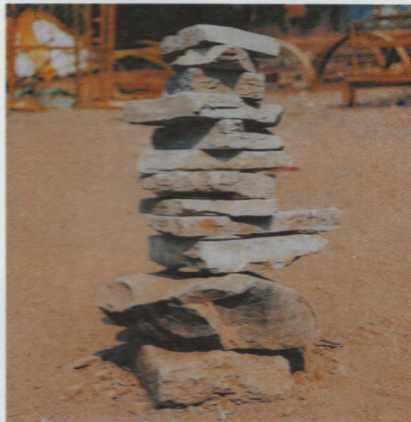
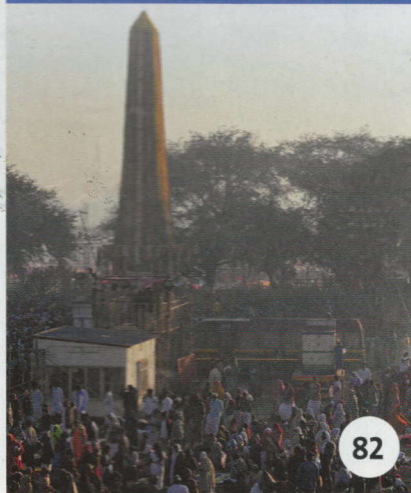


PHOTO ESSAY / COMMUNITIES

**68 A Society of One's Own**

A feminist residential colony in Solapur  
**DISHA PATIL**

BOOKS



POLITICS

**82 Process as Punishment**

Recent books that bear witness to the BK-16's incarceration  
**KAASHIF HAJEE**