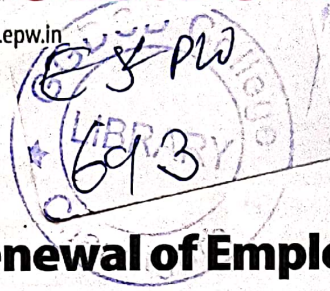


# Economic & Political WEEKLY

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- An Eclipse of Justice

## COMMENT

- Iran's Resilience, US's Hubris, Israel's Malevolence

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- Militarised AI, Private Credit, and Iran War

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- Locating the Global in the Birth of Bangladesh

## CURRENT STATISTICS

## Renewal of Employment Guarantee

Some state governments should consider framing their own rural employment guarantee acts, which would liberate the states from the growing burden of centralised micro-management and present an opportunity to explore different approaches to employment guarantee. page 23

## Military-AI Complex

Given the long-term nexus between finance capital and the US state, the AI boom is being propped up by military spending justified by the potential for AI deployment for defence purposes. page 10

## Economic Concentration

The acceleration of corporate concentration in India after 2015 was driven in large part by financial market conditions, wherein only the most prominent groups could access external finance on favourable terms. page 43

## ST Status in Assam

The increasing dissonance between majoritarian impulses of identity assertion and the constitutionally circumscribed processes of tribal recognition has led to conflicting claims that are difficult to reconcile. page 27

## T K Oommen (1937-2026)

Oommen unsparingly sought to dismantle concepts, categories and frames of analysis that, irrespective of their embeddedness in disciplinary practice, failed to withstand logical scrutiny and empirical validation. page 30

**Militarised AI, Private Credit, and Iran War**

- 10 The dynamics of private credit markets are increasingly tied to military demand, with the US government encouraging private capital to build defence-linked AI infrastructure. — *Farwa Sial, C P Chandrasekhar*

**Kartavyas and the 'Priorities' of 2025–26**

- 13 Given the lower projected tax revenue/GDP ratio and the excessive dependence on the surplus from the RBI, the *kartavyas* may face the same fate of cutbacks as the "seven priorities" of the previous budget. — *Mala Lalvani, Ajit Karnik*

**Recasting Rural Employment**

- 19 By consolidating rural employment expenditure into a centrally planned flagship programme, the budget moves away from a demand-responsive employment guarantee towards a normatively planned and fiscally capped framework. — *Jyothis Sathyapalan*

**Employment Guarantee: Repeal in Lieu of Repair**

- 23 The Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, rushed through Parliament last December to replace MGNREGA, defuses employment guarantee without addressing any of the implementation issues. — *Jean Drèze, Reetika Khera*

**Politics of ST Status in Assam**

- 26 The tabling of the Group of Ministers report in the Assam Legislative Assembly for granting Scheduled Tribe status to six communities has ignited widespread protests among the existing STs in Assam. — *Purna Kanta Taye, Gaurav Das*

**T K Oommen and the Art of Social Sciences**

- 30 T K Oommen's sociology, occasionally informed by "a perspective from below," was inclined towards understanding the sources of persisting inequality, hierarchy and injustice. — *Tanweer Fazal*

**Lessons from the Trump Tariff Shock**

- 38 The tariffs imposed by the Trump administration in 2025 sharply disrupted India's textile and garment sector, exposing vulnerabilities arising from export concentration. While short-term interventions have provided immediate relief, their longer-term effectiveness will depend on coordinated policy efforts. — *Sangeeta Ghosh*

**Economic Concentration in India**

- 43 Trends in corporate concentration in India's non-financial sector are examined, using firm-level data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy Prowess database. Data on asset and income distribution show an overall decline in the public sector's share and a steady increase in the share held by the top five private business groups. — *Zico Dasgupta, Arjun Jayadev*

**The Clothing Crisis during the Bengal Famine**

- 52 During World War II, British India faced the Bengal famine of 1943–44 and a parallel "cloth famine." Starving homeless people were forced to remain half-naked during a relatively harsh winter. The crisis stemmed from military priorities in textiles, halted Japanese imports, and rising Indian exports. — *Toru Matsumoto*

**The 'Bare Life' of D-voters**

- 59 Caught between the status of citizen and non-citizen, many D-voters in Assam face deep social, economic, and political marginalisation. They are forced to fight two battles simultaneously: one for daily survival and another legal struggle to prove their Indian citizenship. — *Debashis Nath, Silpee Parashar*

**Locating the Global in the Birth of Bangladesh**

- 68 Srinath Raghavan and Gary Bass's 2013 works advanced a global history of 1971 in East Pakistan. Subho Basu extends this scholarship by examining how global revolutionary currents, Cold War dynamics, and domestic politics interacted in the decade before the crisis. — *Bilal Ahmad Tantray*

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