

Europe: The Unraveling of a Continent in Denial

As the continent clings to outdated illusions of dominance, the war in Ukraine has exposed decades of strategic miscalculations and betrayals. Now, with Washington shifting priorities and internal fractures deepening, Europe faces a stark choice: reclaim sovereignty or fade into irrelevance

FIRST Column

The spectacle that unfolded in the Oval Office of the White House last week was nothing short of a geopolitical farce—Volodymyr Zelensky, once the West's prized emissary of democracy, now reduced to a beleaguered supplicant before Donald Trump and his inner circle. The desperation in his voice was palpable as he attempted to navigate the most humiliating moment of his political career with forced composure. But Trump appeared to be sizing up the Ukrainian president for obsolescence, searching for a more pliable figure to serve American interests in Ukraine. The bitter irony of history plays out in cycles, and it seems Zelensky is now on the cusp of becoming the sacrificial lamb for the West's mounting failures—much like past puppets discarded when their usefulness waned.

Yet this moment is more than just an embarrassing episode for Ukraine's leader; it is emblematic of a much deeper malaise—a reckoning that Europe itself can no longer evade. The European continent, which for centuries positioned itself as the epicentre of enlightenment, democracy, and civilisation, is now teetering on the precipice of its catastrophic undoing. The Ukraine war, a conflict exacerbated by the very hands that claim to seek peace, is but a symptom of an existential crisis decades-if not centuries-in the making.

Europe's ruling elite, basking in the illusions of their hegemonic past, have orchestrated betrayal after betrayal, not only against external powers but also against their long-term survival. The great deception played on the USSR, for instance, was a masterstroke in Western duplicity. The fall of the Soviet Union was not an organic collapse but a carefully engineered dismantling, with Europe-hand in hand with the United States and Britain—undermining Moscow's geopolitical reach under the guise of partnership. Vladimir Putin himself, in his now-infamous 2007 Munich speech, laid bare the West's treachery: "What happened to the assurances given by Western partners after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact? Where are these declarations today? No one even remembers them. But I will allow myself to remind this audience what was said. I would like to quote the speech of NATO General Secretary Mr Woerner in Brussels on 17 May 1990. He said: 'The fact that we are ready not to place a NATO army outside of German territory gives the Soviet Union a firm security guarantee.' Where are these guarantees?"

These assurances were nothing more than words on paper—meaningless in the grand chessboard of Western hegemony. NATO expanded, encircling Russia, renege on every commitment, demonstrating that Europe had no intention of honouring its promises. The deliberate humiliation of Russia post-1991—the eastward march of NATO, the exploitation of Russian economic vul-



nerabilities under Western-advised 'shock therapy'—was an act of strategic subjugation. And yet, in an extraordinary twist of fate, the very forces that dismantled the USSR are now engineering their disintegration.

History is rife with European fragmentation, political betrayal, and self-inflicted wounds. The Treaty of Versailles, a document intended to secure peace after the First World War, instead laid the foundation for the Second, as European powers—drunk on their perceived victory—imposed punitive measures that sowed the seeds of future destruction. The division of Germany, the appeasement of Hitler at Munich, and the Cold War partitions across the continent all serve as testaments to the European elite's tendency to manufacture crises rather than resolve them.

The Napoleonic Wars saw Europe in constant flux, with alliances forged and broken in pursuit of hegemonic domination. The Concert of Europe, an attempt to stabilise the continent in the 19th century, ultimately disintegrated as



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imperial ambitions and nationalist movements undermined its very premise. European unity has historically been an illusion—punctuated by moments of cooperation swiftly followed by bitter enmities. And yet, despite this bloodstained history, modern European leaders refuse to acknowledge the destructive cycle they are perpetuating in Ukraine. Europe, shackled by its servitude to American interests, blindly followed Washington into every geopolitical quagmire—be it in Iraq, Libya, Syria, or now Ukraine—without considering the long-term consequences. The current conflict in Ukraine is not an aberration; it is the logical culmination of decades of strategic miscalculations. The EU, by choosing to weaponise Ukraine as a

battering ram against Russia rather than seeking diplomatic equilibrium, has sealed its fate. Instead of charting an independent course towards true strategic autonomy, Europe doubled down on its vassal status to the United States, believing that this alignment would ensure perpetual dominance. But as the tides shift—with Washington's attention pivoting towards Asia and Trump poised to prioritise 'America First' over NATO's European commitments—the continent is waking up to a grim reality: it has no viable future without a fundamental realignment.

The past century has been a cycle of European duplicity—not only against Russia but also against the Global South. Latin America, Africa, and Asia suffered under colonial plunder and economic subjugation, all dressed in the language of progress. The European elite, now feigning moral righteousness in Ukraine, were the very architects of untold misery across the world. France still holds African nations in a monetary stranglehold through the CFA franc, Britain continues to exert

undue influence in its former colonies, and European financial institutions dictate the economic policies of entire regions. The same Europe that lectures Russia on sovereignty had no qualms about redrawing borders, toppling governments, and instigating wars to maintain its grasp on power.

But this project is now crumbling under its contradictions. The rise of multipolarity—with China, Russia, and the Global South forging alternative economic and political alliances—signals the twilight of Western supremacy. Europe, so accustomed to imposing its will on others, now finds itself adrift: incapable of self-reliance, bereft of true leadership, and, most damningly, out of time.

Macron's recent overtures regarding European nuclear deterrence—an implicit admission that American security guarantees are no longer sacrosanct—reveal a bloc scrambling for existential answers. Yet even now, the European elite refuse to acknowledge their culpability in this crisis. Instead of introspection, they escalate their reckless adventurism, funnelling billions into Ukraine in a deluded attempt to 'bleed Russia dry'—a strategy eerily reminiscent of Cold War-era hubris, but one that now imperils Europe itself.

As a result, inflation, energy crises, deindustrialisation, and mounting social unrest are becoming the new normal. The EU, having sanctioned itself into economic paralysis, is watching its industrial base erode while American corporations feast on the carcass of what was once the world's most formidable economic bloc. Germany, the economic engine of Europe, is faltering under the weight of its self-imposed dependence on American diktats. The Franco-German axis—long heralded as the linchpin of European unity—is fracturing under competing interests. Southern Europe resents Northern Europe's austerity, Eastern Europe is increasingly questioning Brussels' authority, and Britain has already jumped ship.

This is Europe's moment of reckoning. It must either embrace true emancipation—breaking free from the yoke of outdated political dominion, reconciling with Russia, and forging a future dictated by its sovereign interests—or continue its descent into irrelevance. The choice is stark. The EU can either learn from history or become its latest tragic casualty.

The lesson of the USSR should not be lost on Europe. Superpowers do not fall in a day—they rot from within, weakened by arrogance, strategic miscalculations, and a failure to adapt to shifting geopolitical realities. Europe stands at that precipice now. The only question that remains is whether it dares to step back before the abyss swallows it whole.

(The writer is a journalist and a policy analyst. Views expressed are personal)

How Three New Societies Are Shielding Agriculture from Global Trade Shocks

The world is witnessing a major realignment in global trade as the US tariff war disrupts supply chains and reshapes agricultural exports. Countries that once relied on established trade routes are now facing uncertainty, forcing them to look for alternative suppliers. In this evolving landscape, many fear that India's agriculture exports might be affected, but the reality is different. India is not just insulated from these shocks; it is positioned to thrive. The reason behind this resilience lies in a historic transformation—the creation of three new multistate cooperative societies.

These cooperatives are more than just policy initiatives, they are a strategic shield, ensuring that Indian farmers, agribusinesses, and exporters do not become victims of global trade volatility. Instead of fearing disruptions, India is using this moment to expand its global agricultural footprint, leveraging the power of cooperatives to make its exports stronger, more competitive, and more farmer-centric. The US has been engaged in a prolonged trade war, particularly with China and the European Union.

American tariffs on Chinese goods led to retaliatory measures, including high tariffs on US agricultural products such as soybeans, corn, and pork. These policies disrupted global supply chains, forcing importing countries to search for new suppliers. Historically, such trade wars create volatility, where smaller agricultural exporters struggle to compete with larger economies.

Many feared that India, which is still building its export infrastructure, might lose out in the global realignment. However, this time, India has turned the challenge into an opportunity—by strategically strengthening its cooperative economic framework to ensure that Indian agriculture emerges stronger, not weaker.

The government's bold decision to establish three new multistate cooperative societies has changed the game for Indian agriculture exports. These cooperatives are not just support structures; they are economic engines, ensuring that Indian farmers and agri-businesses are directly connected to global markets without dependency on middlemen or volatile international policies. The National Multi-State Cooperative Export Society is the backbone of India's new export strategy, enabling farmers to directly participate in exports, giving them better prices, and eliminating exploitative middlemen.

By standardising quality, improving logistics, and ensuring compliance with global trade requirements, this cooperative will make India a reliable alternative to disrupted supply chains elsewhere. The National Multi-State Cooperative Organic Society will capitalise on the growing demand for organic and chemical-free produce, helping Indian farmers secure premium prices

and high-quality agricultural suppliers, India—powered by its new cooperative revolution—stands ready to meet this demand. However, the success of this model will depend on the cooperation among cooperatives, ensuring that they work in harmony to create a seamless economic framework that benefits farmers at every level. The cooperative economic framework is not just about collective trade—it is about collective prosperity.

It is a movement that redefines how India participates in global trade, ensuring that its farmers are not just contributors but decision-makers in the global agricultural economy. By fostering deeper collaboration between cooperatives, ensuring knowledge-sharing, and building an ecosystem of trust, India is setting an example for the world on how cooperation can drive economic strength.

Conclusion
India's response to global trade disruptions is not just defensive—it is transformative. By establishing three powerful multistate cooperative societies, the country has ensured that its agricultural exports are resilient, competitive, and farmer-driven.

These cooperatives are more than economic instruments; they are a strategic shield that insulates Indian agriculture from tariff shocks and volatile global policies. Instead of relying on traditional supply chains, India is proactively building new trade alliances, particularly in the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia. By focusing on high-value and organic products, streamlining logistics, and removing exploitative middlemen, the country is positioning itself as a reliable global supplier.

The National Multi-State Cooperative Export, Organic, and Seed Societies collectively empower farmers, giving them direct market access and better price stability. As the world searches for stable agricultural partners, India is emerging as a global leader, proving that cooperative-led trade is the key to sustainable growth. This is not just about increasing exports; it is about reshaping India's rural economy and ensuring that farmers are at the center of global trade. The cooperative movement is India's answer to economic resilience, making its agriculture future-proof.

This is not just a policy shift; it is a transformation that will define the future of Indian agriculture for decades to come. Cooperation is not just a principle—it is the foundation of India's new economic resilience.

Jai Kisan! Jai Cooperative Movement!
(The writer was a member of the high level MSP committee, Ministry of Agriculture. Views expressed are personal)



BINOD ANAND

The Qualities That Shape Our Destiny

According to scriptures, there are about 36 divine qualities (36 Gunas), and if one does not have any one of these divine qualities, then it means he/she has the opposite—the demoniac qualities—which, as everyone knows, result in peacelessness, disease, sorrow, and suffering. Most people do not yet know that the absence of one or the other divine quality is the cause of one or the other kind of human misery.

They, therefore, try to find out its cause in the political, economic, cultural, or social system. The truth, however, is that positive or negative qualities manifest themselves through human behaviour or human activity, whether it be a political, economic, cultural, or social activity. One should, therefore, try to trace the negativity and work for positivity in human behaviour rather than search for the cause elsewhere.

The present society has made marvellous progress in various fields, but emotionally, it is much weaker.

Man has not been able to control his impulsive nature, ambitions, anger, and anxiety. There is thus a lot of imbalance created by rapid and great advancement in science and technology on the one hand and a lack or absence of parallel progress in emotional maturity, self-control, and ethical abilities on the other hand.

This has resulted in many problems that we are facing today. It can thus be said that the qualities in man determine the quality of his life and his peaceful and happy, or peaceless and sorrowful state. But it is a pity that man has been trying to find happiness in ruling over big territories, possessing a lot of property or wealth, and having a great many comforts.

He has, therefore, been making efforts to have economic prosperity even by adopting demoniac qualities. He has been trying to achieve success, name and fame, or political and economic power even if his soul had to give up the divine qualities and resort to negative or demoniacal qualities. This has led to the corruption of the soul, degeneration of society, and peacelessness and suffering of various kinds.

If we accept this analysis of our present predicament, then we have to admit that we have had a fall in moral values and divine qualities, and what we require today is to extricate and uplift ourselves from this situation with the help of education that can restore the divine qualities in us. Our other efforts to make the world a better place to live in would be of no avail unless and until there is a qualitative change in our nature and behaviour.

Complete peace, it should be remembered,



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comes from complete purity or full-fledged divine nature. Even a fraction of one demoniac quality leads to a lessening of peace in that proportion, if not more.

It should also be noted that demoniacal qualities have linkages among themselves, even as divine qualities are connected among themselves and strengthen and sustain each other. So, liberation from one negative quality leads to at least some liberation from other negative qualities. Thus, even our little effort to inculcate, in ourselves, some divine qualities ultimately leads to a great overall change in our nature and results in enhancement in the quality of our inner happiness.

In the current state of the world, where materialism is often prioritized over spiritual growth, the loss of divine qualities has become more evident. People are increasingly finding themselves trapped in cycles of stress, competition, and dissatisfaction, despite their material success.

This is because material achievements, while significant, cannot replace the profound peace and contentment that come from living a life grounded in divine principles. The more we focus on accumulating wealth and power at the expense of our inner values, the more we drift away from true happiness. Moreover, demoniacal qualities such as greed, envy, and pride not only harm the individual but also have a ripple effect on society as a whole. They lead to corruption, injustice, and conflicts that disrupt social harmony and undermine collective well-being. In contrast, divine qualities like compassion, humility, and selflessness create an environment where mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation can flourish. This, in turn, lays the foundation for a society that is not only prosperous but also peaceful and just.

One must, therefore, in one's interest and in the interest of building a better world, pay attention to the task of restoration of divine qualities and elimination of devilish qualities or negative traits. In this lies not only the hope for our liberation but also the key to improving the overall conditions of the world.

To conclude, the true happiness and peace stem from divine qualities, not material success. The pursuit of wealth and power at the expense of inner values leads to suffering and societal decay. By cultivating compassion, humility, and selflessness, we can restore harmony, uplift humanity, and create a just, peaceful world for future generations.

(The writer is a spiritual educator and a popular columnist. Views expressed are personal)

Sports ministry revokes suspension imposed on WFI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

The Sports Ministry has revoked the suspension imposed on the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), ending the months of uncertainty surrounding the sport and paving the way for resumption of activities, including selection trials for the upcoming Asian Championship in Amman.

The ministry had suspended the WFI on December 24, 2023 for lapses in governance and procedural integrity by the new body, which was elected on December 21. It had asked IOA to form an ad-hoc panel to run the affairs of the Federation.

The Sanjay Singh-led body had announced the conduct of Under-15 and Under-20 National Championships in Nandini Nagar, Gonda — the stronghold of former WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh — and the choice of venue irked the government since the former BJP MP was facing charges of sexual harassment.

The ministry, in its order issued on Monday, said that the WFI has taken compliant measures, so in larger interest of the sport and athletes, the ministry has decided to lift the suspension.

There were complaints that the WFI was still operating from the residence of Brij Bhushan, prompting the ministry to form a verification committee, which performed a spot inspection and found that the Federation had shifted its office to East Vinod Nagar in New Delhi.

The ministry was satisfied with the corrective measures taken and considering that not having a competent body in place will affect Indian wrestlers' medal chances at 2026 Asian Games and 2028 Olympic Games, it ended the suspension.

"I thank the government for taking this step. It will allow us to function smoothly. It was needed for the sake of the sport. The athletes were suffering for lack of competitions," Sanjay Singh said.

The ministry, though, has asked the WFI to follow certain directions, such as the Federation has to ensure that there is a balance of power among the elected office bearers, and it keeps itself disassociated from the suspended/terminated officials.

It may be noted that Prem Chand Lochab, the new general secretary, was elected from the rival camp and the ministry's directive could be understood in that context.

"The EC of the WFI must give an

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— SANJAY SINGH

undertaking in this regard within 4 weeks. Any violation of the undertaking will invite appropriate legal action, including the action under the Sports Code," the ministry said in its order.

It also said that the WFI must ensure that the selection for all international events should be done in a free, fair and transparent manner as per the extant provisions of the Sports Code and the other latest instructions issued in this regard along with regulations issued from time-to-time by the UWW (United World Wrestling).

The WFI president said there is nothing that can't be followed.

"We have already shifted to a new office and soon we will call for an EC meeting and also issue a circular for the selection trials. We have no issues in following these instructions," he said.

The Asian Championship is scheduled to be held in Amman, Jordan from March 25. The Indian wrestlers missed out on competing in Ranking Series tourna-



ments in Zagreb and Albania due to the ministry's suspension and the court cases filed by prominent wrestlers Vinesh Phogat, Bajrang Punia and Satyawart Kadian.

The Indian wrestlers could have missed participation in the World Championship

also last year but after they protested outside the residence of Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, they were allowed to participate.

The wrestlers, who had led the protest against Brij Bhushan, had contended that the WFI did not have the authority to pick

national teams since it was suspended.

The court had directed the Indian Olympic Association to restore the ad-hoc panel for managing the WFI but the sports body had refused, saying UWW, the world governing body, recognises only the WFI and won't accept entries from the ad-hoc panel.

The UWW, which lifted its suspension on WFI on January 13, 2024, had threatened IOA to suspend WFI again if there was interference in its governance.

"We are so relieved that this suspension has been lifted. There was a complete lull, the young wrestlers were suffering for no fault of theirs. They were missing tournaments, there was no national camp. The suspension should have been lifted long back," said a coach associated with a leading training centre in Haryana.

Vinesh, Bajrang and Sakshi Malik had accused Brij Bhushan of sexual abuse of junior wrestlers and held a long protest at Jantar Mantar. An FIR was lodged and the former BJP MP is facing a trial in the case. Brij Bhushan has denied the charge.

Vinesh later joined the Congress and won the Julana seat during the Haryana state elections last year. Bajrang was appointed chief of All India Kisan Congress (AIKC).

New Zealand rest T20 regulars for series against Pakistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Wellington

New Zealand have rested a majority of their T20 regulars for the home series against Pakistan with the IPL around the corner.

The series, comprising five T20Is, begins March 16 while the IPL begins March 22.

Michael Bracewell, who was one of the main performers for New Zealand in the Champions Trophy (CT), will lead the side in the absence of Mitchell Santner.

Besides Bracewell, six more players in the T20 squad featured in the 50-over Champions Trophy. New Zealand lost the final to India on Sunday.

Devon Conway, Lockie Ferguson, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra and white-ball captain Santner were unavailable for selection due to IPL commitments. Kyle Jamieson and Will O'Rourke have been included only for the first three games of the series, as the selectors seek to manage the workload of the pace bowlers returning from the Champions Trophy.

Matt Henry, who finished as the leading wicket-taker in the tournament despite missing the final through injury, has been selected for games four and five, subject to further assessment once the ODI squad arrives home on Wednesday.

Bevon Jacobs, who was part of the squad for the recent T20 series against Sri Lanka, was unavailable due to IPL commitments, while Kane Williamson wasn't considered for selection after making himself unavailable.

Selector Sam Wells said the Pakistan series was important for several reasons.

"We're certainly starting to narrow our sights on the ICC T20 World Cup in India next February and March," he said.

"We made it clear in our planning and communication with players that availability for that tournament and the build-up to it was required to be considered for this series against Pakistan.

"Half of this squad is only returning from the Champions Trophy on Wednesday and so we're going to need to manage those players really carefully," he said.

Focus on playing for country: Pant to budding cricketers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

India wicket-keeper Rishabh Pant feels the lure of the IPL is understandable but budding cricketers should always focus on playing for the country as "everything else" follows thereafter.

Pant, who was part of India's triumphant Champions Trophy squad but did not get a game, made his international debut back in 2017.

"Since childhood, I had only one dream—to play for India. I never even thought about playing in the IPL. I think today, people are more focused on the IPL. Of course, it's a great platform, but I believe that if your goal is to play for your country, everything else—including the IPL—will eventually fall into place," Pant told JioHotstar.

"If you have that bigger mindset, success will follow. I always believed that I would play for India one day, and God has been kind. At 18, I got the opportunity to make my debut, and I am grateful for that," said the 27-year-old.

Pant is known for flamboyant style of



play and some of his trademark shots include a one-handed six with the bat often slipping out of his hands. He explained why that happens frequently.

"I think it mostly happens because I hold my bottom hand very lightly. I

mainly try to use my bottom hand for support because, at times, it starts dominating. So, I focus on gripping my top hand tightly," said Pant.

"But when I overreach—especially when the ball is too wide or too short—

it's not always in the ideal hitting zone. Sometimes, the shot I attempt may only have a 30-40 per cent success rate, but depending on the match situation, I'm willing to take that risk. That's my mindset.

"When I take that chance and overreach, I need to do something to maintain balance. At times, it may look like I'm throwing the bat, but in reality, I'm just trying to make the most of that delivery. If my bat slips, if it's not in my hand, or even if it hits my head—my only focus at that moment is finding the boundary."

Pant said being a gymnast in his younger days has also helped him as a cricketer.

"I used to do gymnastics as a kid. My gymnastics coach always told me that it would come in handy in life.

"Basu Sir, our Indian team trainer, once told me in 2018-19, 'Thank you to your gymnastics coach because what he taught you in childhood is still benefiting you today.

I kept practicing hand springs, and it has played a huge role in my fitness for sure," he said.

PCB files formal complaint with ICC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Karachi

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is still waiting for a "formal clarification" from the ICC on the issue of not having their representative on stage for the closing ceremony of the Champions Trophy in Dubai.

India beat New Zealand by four wickets in the title clash on Sunday to win the tournament for the third time.

"We have filed a formal complaint with the ICC as what happened is unacceptable to us," a PCB official said on Tuesday. The controversy erupted when Sumair Ahmed, who is the chief operating officer of the PCB and was also the tournament director of the Champions Trophy, was not invited on stage for the final presentation.

BCCI president Roger Binny presented the white jackets to India players and the medals to match officials, while ICC chairman Jay Shah handed the trophy to skipper Rohit Sharma and gave the medals to the winners.

The reasons being given for not having our COO and tournament director on stage for the final presentation make no sense to us. We are waiting for a formal clarification/apology," the PCB official said.

"We are appalled by this blatant disregard for Pakistan's role as the host nation," the official said. He said the PCB had informed the ICC about Sumair Ahmed's presence in Dubai for the presentation ceremony in advance and he also met and congratulated Jay Shah and some BCCI officials after India's win.

"Giving explanations that ICC only invites CEOs, chairmen, vice-chairmen or secretaries for the ceremony is illogical.

"We want a full public clarification and an assurance that such biased and unjust treatment will not happen again or we will push this matter to the board of governors," he added.

The reasons being given for not having our COO and tournament director on stage for the final presentation make no sense to us
— PAKISTAN CRICKET BOARD

Victorious Indian cricketers return home ahead of IPL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

The Indian cricketers, led by Rohit Sharma, have made a quiet return home following their triumph in the Champions Trophy (CT) in Dubai. After leading India to their second ICC title in nine months, skipper Rohit landed back in Mumbai on Monday night.

The squad members have got a week off before they join their respective IPL teams ahead of the tournament beginning March 22.

"All the players with families left from Dubai on Monday. There are some players who have stayed back for a couple of days," a BCCI source told PTI.

With players preferring to rest ahead of the two-month-long IPL, the BCCI did not plan a felicitation for the team like it did when the squad returned

from Barbados following the win in the T20 World Cup. The players had also met Prime Minister Narendra Modi following their return from Barbados via a special flight back in July.

Head coach Gautam Gambhir and pacer Harshit Rana landed in Delhi on Monday night. Superstar Virat Kohli had left the team hotel with wife Anushka Sharma right after the team returned from the Dubai International Stadium late on Sunday night.

Shreyas Iyer, who played a big role in the middle order, will captain Punjab Kings and will join the team on March 16. India beat New Zealand by four wickets to win their third Champions Trophy. They were the only unbeaten side in the eight-team tournament.

Though Pakistan were the tournament hosts, India played all their games in Dubai as per the agreed hybrid model.

MCG to host a night match between Australia, England

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Melbourne

The 150th anniversary test between Australia and England will be held under lights at the Melbourne Cricket Ground from March 11-15, 2027. Cricket Australia announced Tuesday that the historic match will be the first day-night men's test at the MCG.

The famous stadium on the edge of downtown Melbourne hosted the first cricket test in 1877 and the centenary test between Australia and England in 1977. Australia won by a 45-run margin in both of those matches.

"The 150th anniversary test at the MCG will be one of the great cricket events, and playing under lights will be a fantastic way to celebrate both our game's rich heritage and test cricket's modern evolution," Cricket Australia chief executive Todd Greenberg said. "It will also help ensure more people are able to attend and watch what will be a fan-

tastic occasion.

"The Centenary Test created many iconic performances, including David Hooke's five consecutive boundaries off Tony Greig, Rick McCosker batting with a broken jaw and Derek Randall's defiant century, and I'm sure the 150th test will create its own lifelong memories." Australia is hosting the 2025-26 Ashes series against England starting in November.

The Australian men's team, coming off a semifinal run at the Champions Trophy, is set to defend its World Test Championship title in a final against South Africa in England in June.

Australia has won 12 of the 13 day-night test matches — which are played with a pink ball and have day and night sessions daily — it has contested at home since introducing the concept in 2015. Eight of those tests have been in Adelaide, and none has started later than January.

Challenging two-year cycle to start for coach Gautam Gambhir with England tour

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

People who know Gautam Gambhir, describe him as someone "boringly consistent", someone who has not even changed his eating pattern in the last 20 years.

An experiment is out of question.

He loves wearing his denims for casual gatherings and it has not changed for years.

But when it comes to cricket, his brain is always ticking and seeking solutions to various strategic problems.

It has been eight months since Gambhir took charge of the national team after Rahul Dravid ended his stint with the T20 World Cup triumph in July.

The man from Delhi's Old Rajinder Nagar has witnessed some heartbreaking and baffling defeats as well as success. He has seen both ends of the spectrum with high of Champions Trophy (CT) and low of six Test losses.

The CT win has come like a breath of fresh air and 'Guru Gambhir' will get a chance to analyse the big picture as Indian cricket is expected to undergo a sea-change in the next two crucial years.

It won't be wrong to say that Gambhir has completed his probation period and will get into a phase where he would have three distinct challenges, starting with the Test tour of England.

That will be, as usual, right after the T20 spectacle known as IPL with no time for

preparation.

His second big challenge will be the 2026 T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka where Suryakumar Yadav's men will be defending their title.

And last but certainly not the least is 2027 ODI World Cup in South Africa, which will be a helluva challenge.

If one segregates Gambhir's coaching across formats, he has already built a fabulous core for the T20 team with Surya at the helm.

Even as Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja walked into the sunset in shortest format, their absence was hardly felt as the new brand of cricket that India has been playing in T20 is earning them fans globally.

He has unearthed a gem in Abhishek Sharma.

When Varun Chakravarty and Jasprit Bumrah would bowl during a global meet (World T20) those eight overs would be a nightmare for batters. Sanju Samson has found his mojo although Rishabh Pant will be around and so would be Yashasvi Jaiswal.

There is a prolific powerplay wicket-taker in Arshdeep Singh and at least three seam all-rounders in Hardik Pandya, Nitish Kumar Reddy and Shivam Dube.

Surya and Axar along with Hardik are old guards in this team. It is a team which has all its bases covered and is running on auto-pilot with a tweak here and there.

But it is the other two formats where



Gambhir, the strategist, the disciplinarian and the man-manager would have to merge for results.

Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli have made it clear that they are not retiring from ODIs anytime soon. Retirement is an individual call and both have performed in

aggressive bursts can do enough along with Kohli, who is now more of an anchor now.

Rohit has said that he won't retire but was also unsure of his participation in the 2027 World Cup. Here, Gambhir will have to step in. Gambhir's, 'team first' philosophy won't change.

But during the 2027 World Cup Gambhir won't have the option of using four specialist spinners and create magic with totals in range of 240-250.

Scores will be on higher side and the question is if Rohit with his short and

He loathes the superstar culture. He has immense respect for performers which is seniority neutral.

It will not be a surprise if he demands a bit of clarity both from the board as well as national selection committee as to how they plan to see Rohit in ODI scheme of things with only 27 ODI games ahead of World Cup. Another issue to ponder over would be the next captain? Shubman Gill is a terrific ODI player and has been Rohit's deputy but Hardik Pandya is also a good leader, who believes in implementing the coach's strategy to the 'T'.

He did that well in Gujarat Titans with another football team-like head coach Ashish Nehra at the helm.

In immediate future, Gambhir will also have to deal with Test cricket squad where he would face the maximum challenge.

In case Rohit plays and has Jaiswal and KL Rahul in top-three, where will it place Shubman Gill, the Test cricketer.

Will he get all three Bumrah, Mohammed Shami and Mohammad Siraj in best shape for the series where swing and seam will be the order of the day.

And what happens to that one middle-order slot that has been India's Achilles heel for some time. Shall Karun Nair fit in there or Shreyas Iyer should regain his Test place?

'Guru Gambhir' has some really tough choices to make but he has never been afraid of making bold decisions.