

# IT firms alter tack over Trump fears

Pick professionals with higher qualifications for US H1B visas

By **Mail Today Bureau**

**I**NDIAN IT firms such as TCS, Infosys and Wipro are applying for visas for higher level professionals this year to meet the stringent norms that have kicked in with Donald Trump taking over as US President.

The Trump administration on Tuesday issued a stern warning to US companies not to discriminate against qualified American workers by misusing the H-1B work visa programme.

The Justice Department will not tolerate employers misusing the H-1B visa process to discriminate against US workers, said Acting Assistant Attorney General Tom Wheeler of the Civil Rights Division.

He also cautioned that the Justice Department would investigate and prosecute those who overlook qualified American workers for jobs.

The warning came as the US government began accepting employers' H-1B visa petitions for the next fiscal year beginning October 1, 2017.

A US legislation (Lofgren Bill) has been introduced to double minimum wages of H1-B visa holders to USD 130,000.

Consequently, Indian IT firms

have been reducing their dependence on H-1B visas by ramping up local hiring in the US to meet their requirement. The US accounts for over 60 per cent of the export revenues of the Indian IT industry.

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has recently come out with a policy memorandum saying companies applying for visas must provide evidence to establish that the particular position is one in a specialty occupation. The new H-1B guideline rescinds a mem-

orandum issued in December, 2000. Seeking to play down the impact on outsourcing companies, Nasscom said the memorandum reinforces existing prac-

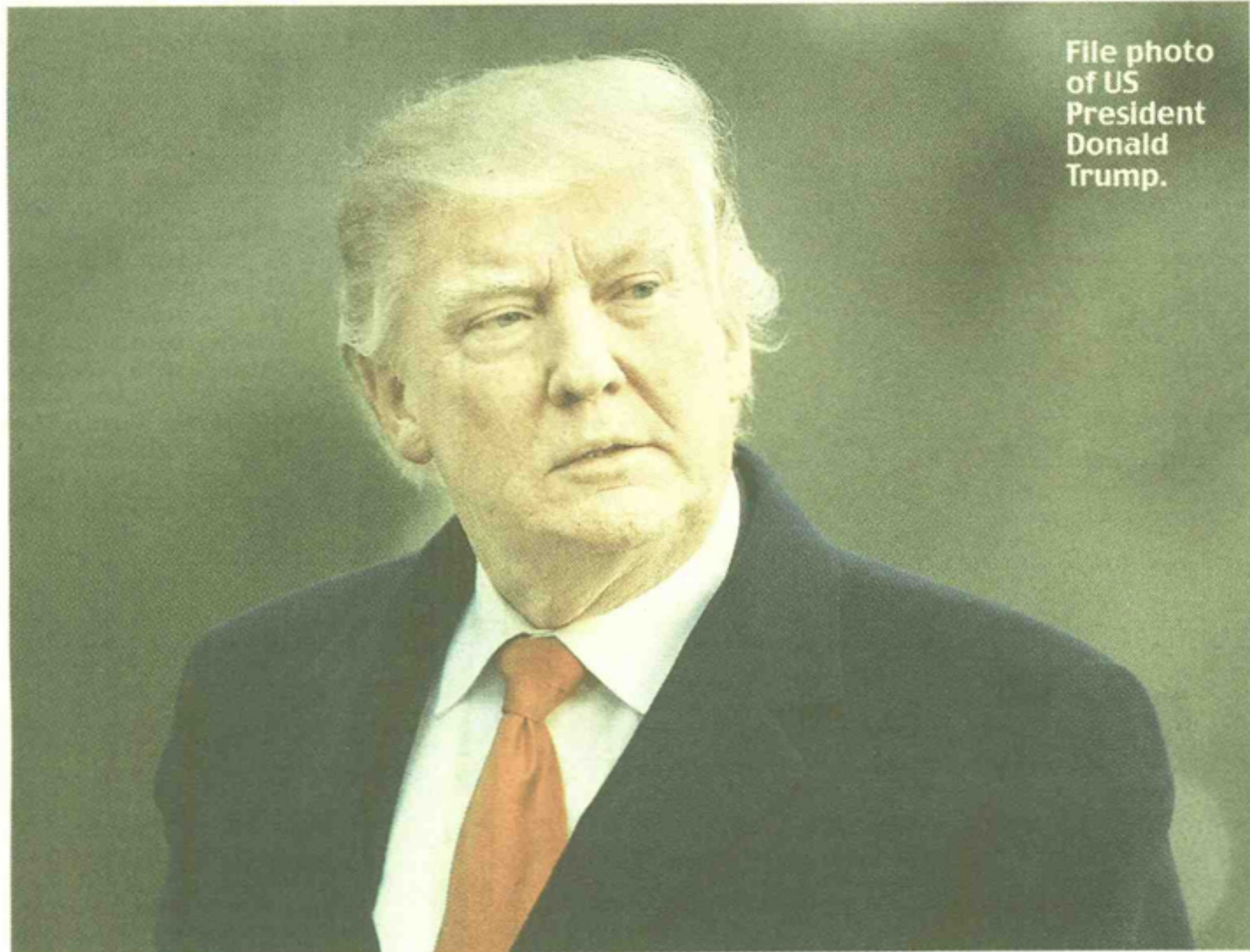
## **US issues stern warning against visa misuse**

tice by adjudicators and clarifies requirements for certain computer professionals.

The clarifying guidance should

have little impact on Nasscom members as this has been the adjudicatory practice for years and also as several of our member executives have noted recently, they are applying for visas for higher level professionals this year, Nasscom said in a statement.

However, Indian IT companies have come in for criticism for alleged misuse of the visa for recruiting low-end computer programmers at cheaper wages from India to displace American workers.



File photo of US President Donald Trump.