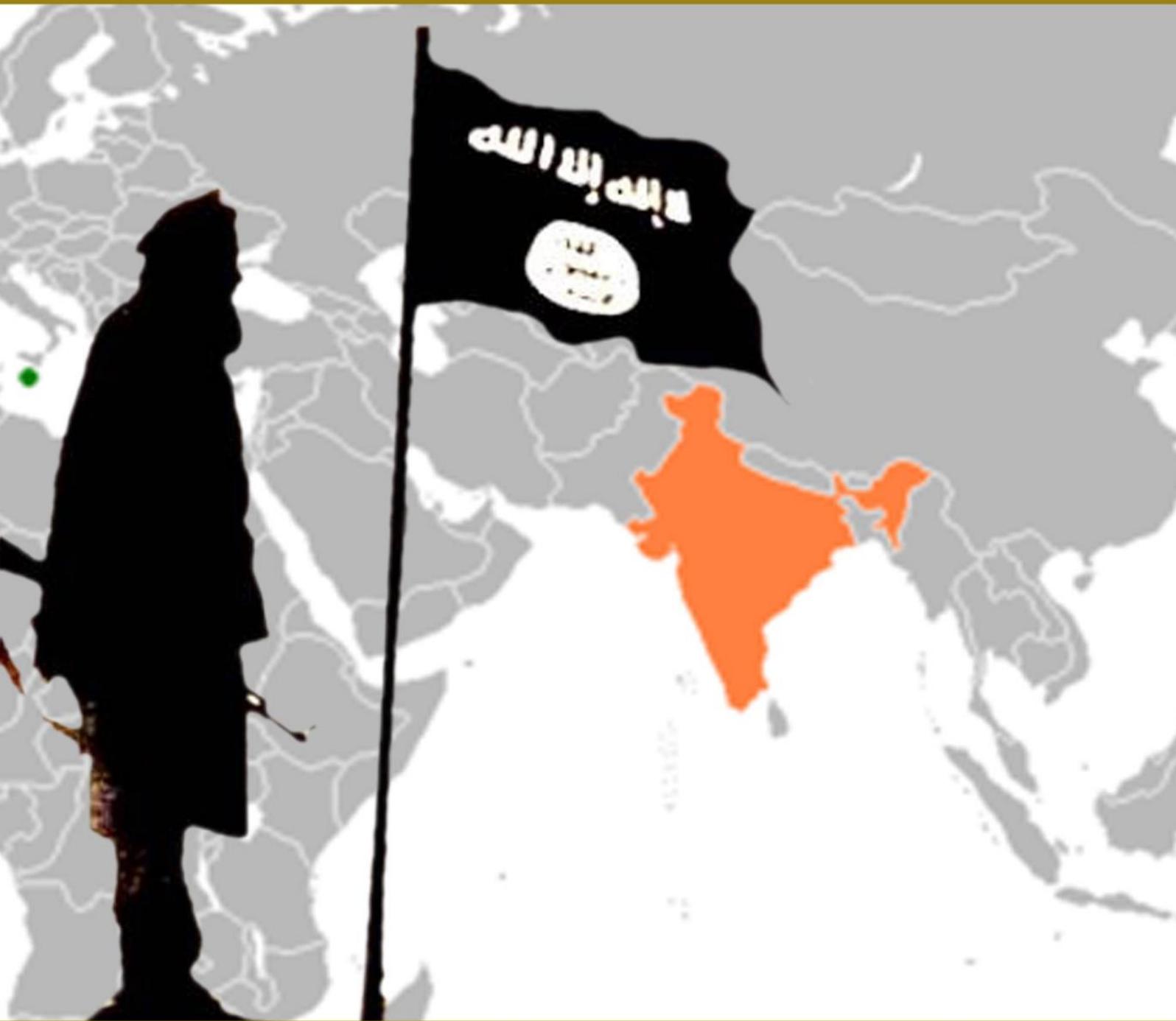


ISS Risk Special Report

ISIS Threat in India

April, 2018



Intelligent Security Solutions Holding Limited

Room 501, 5/f, Chung Ying Building

20 Connaught Road West

Sheung Wan, Hong Kong

Hong Kong Phone: +852 5619 7008

Thailand Phone: +66 97 120 6738

www.issrisk.com

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Executive Summary

From its initial inroads into India in 2014, facilitated through existing networks of Indian terror networks, Islamic State (ISIS) has increased its efforts to recruit and train Indian Muslims to join its ranks and the organization's battlefield efforts in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. With this sustained commitment, ISIS has yielded steady progress. Unlike counterparts in Europe and the US, whose willingness to join ISIS in fighting for its envisioned caliphate waxed and waned with the extremist organization's victories and defeats, its support among Indian Muslims and sympathizers has remained relatively persistent, if limited. India's numerous domestic conflicts and the struggles of neighbouring countries with Islamic extremism offer fertile ground for ISIS expansion going forward.

ISIS has made further progress in utilizing local conflicts and grievances in other Asian countries, particularly the Philippines, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan, with India thus far mainly serving as a recruitment base for the extremist group's transnational activities in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. Although ISIS's first direct planned attack within India was foiled in 2016, the risk the organisation poses has increased in recent years despite the media's regular espousing of its loss of physical territory as a 'loss of strength and capability'. Our intelligence analysis however identifies no such loss of initiative or momentum. ISIS has steadily shifted its focus onto Indian targets utilising increasing numbers of trained, radicalized Indian Muslims returning from the battlefields of Iraq and Syria, with convenient local training grounds offered in neighbouring states and an expansion of their online propaganda efforts.

Online radicalization has helped alter the initial pattern of ISIS recruits hailing from the provinces of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra and Jammu Kashmir, with new members now hail from areas throughout the Indian subcontinent. However, ISIS's efforts have consistently targeted and succeeded most in areas with a history of localised extremist groups and uneasy relations with the central government. Despite its relatively lower population of Muslims, compared with northern states like Jammu Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh, southern Tamil Nadu and Kerala have in the past experienced communist governance and hosted extremist groups, such as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. With the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the centre and the BJP also being in power in more than 20 provinces; some sections of the Indian Muslim society feel their religious and cultural identities are under threat. This has created an environment where these sections of the Muslim population feel disenchanting with the existing democratic system where they believe their voices are being neglected and

become easy preys for radical brainwashing. ISIS has seized upon these grievances, releasing videos of fighters swearing vengeance for the victims of the 2002 Gujarat riots, during which Prime Minister Modi served as chief minister. Further efforts to stoke existing tensions include the organization's efforts along with tribal communities and Maoist insurgency in mineral rich central India, which have met with mixed success in the latter case due to the groups' contradictory goals. ISIS has also sought and is likely to continue to exploit the unstable Rohingya situation along the nearby Myanmar-Bangladesh border.

In the wake of its dislocation from Iraq and Syria and the resulting expansion of its theatre of action, ISIS is more likely to pursue creating and sustaining a global network of radicalized individuals and cells that includes India, than it is to establish any substantial ground presence. Still, the increasing number of Indians arrested in the past year either going to or returning from ISIS battlefronts indicates the organization's growing presence in the country and the continuing success of its recruitment networks. Its twin focus on exploiting existing tensions in historically conflict-ridden areas and dedication to online radicalization in more networked and tech-savvy regions (particularly through Karnataka-born recruiter Shafi Amar), help explain ISIS's increasing impact in India, despite its limited deployment of physical resources. After Indian authorities banned the group and shut down 32 of its affiliated websites in December 2014, ISIS continued its online efforts through Skype, Signal, Trillion, Telegram, Tulanota and other communication apps. Also, despite the small number of directly affiliated Indian ISIS fighters (only 132 have been named), ISIS has secured the allegiance of several existing domestic terrorist groups, including the Indian Mujahideen (IM), Ansar-ut Tawhid fi Bilad al-Hind (AuT) and Junood-al-Khalifa-e-Hind (JKH), as well as smaller cells like Ansarul Khalifa Kerala and foreign groups like Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), that have emerged as transnational threats to India.

Despite the relatively effective efforts of Indian counter-terrorism authorities in curtailing the threat ISIS poses, with the organization no longer consumed with defending a territorial 'caliphate,' it is now free to shift its strategy toward creating new theatres of action across the globe, focusing particularly on areas with large and discontented Muslim populations, as exist throughout the Indian subcontinent. As it does so, ISIS will find an India riven by internal divisions, bordered by hotbeds of Islamic extremism and populated by numerous extremist groups. Although ISIS's numbers within India remain small, and its activities largely focused on Bangladesh and the Af-Pak region; since 2014 it has steadily developed a significant online recruiting apparatus, particularly in more technologically advanced areas like Hyderabad, as well as networks with numerous domestic terror organizations. Adding further risk are radicalized Indian returnee fighters from Syria and Iraq to highly unstable

border zones with both Bangladesh and Myanmar. The combination of these factors suggest that ISIS poses a genuine and continuing threat to India going forward, one that will require the continued vigilance and effective, well-coordinated efforts of Indian authorities to keep in check.



1. Methodology

This report is based on ISS Risk's assets based in India which actively monitors the situation on the Indian sub-continent. The enhanced intelligence sharing capabilities by intelligence agencies, security officials, journalists and Indian ministries have contributed to a holistic approach which informs ISS Risk's assessment.

2. Introduction

1.1 2014 – 2017: ISIS opening an Indian front?

The initial observations of ISIS¹ activities in India from 2014, suggest the primary objectives has been the creation of in-roads to India, facilitated by networks between already-existing local Indian terrorist groups such as the splinter-group of the Indian Mujahideen (IM), the Ansar-ut Tawhid fi Bilad al-Hind (AuT) and its affiliate group, Junood-al-Khalifa-e-Hind (JKH) (also known as the Caliph's Army of India), and the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and ISIS itself. Also, the recruitment and instructing of Indian Muslims to join the ranks of ISIS and send them to the battlefronts in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan to fight for the envisioned caliphate, appears to have been an objective. The overall tendency based on multiple arrests of Indian Muslims and sympathizers indicate the increasing efforts in targeting India by ISIS.

The number of Indians joining ISIS started to surge in 2014 in the wake of ISIS' rapid influence in the Middle East and has been continuous till now. This development was paralleled with the surge in foreign fighters from the 'West', mostly Europeans (5000) and Russians (9000) but also some North Americans (129), who also travelled to Iraq and Syria in order to join ISIS in the same time period. Both flows of foreign fighters can be attributed to ISIS' battlefield victories in Iraq and Syria as well as ISIS' successful online propaganda campaign, which called for Muslims to support the establishment of a territorial caliphate while at the same time effectively creating a virtual caliphate.

India is home to over 170million Muslims, yet ISIS' messages has not had the same impact and pull in Hindu-majority India as it had in Europe and Russia. However, it is only the flow of Westerns to ISIS that has been diminishing in the wake of ISIS battlefield defeat; the support for ISIS by Indian Muslims and sympathizers remain relatively persistent, though comparatively limited, and the domestic conflicts and struggles found throughout South Asia

¹ The terror organization goes by "Islamic State of Iraq and Syria" (ISIS), "Islamic State of Iraq and Levant" (ISIL), "Daesh", or simply "Islamic State" (IS). ISIS is used in this report.

offers potential fertile grounds for ISIS.

ISIS has been successful in utilizing local conflicts and grievances in other Asian countries, for instance the Philippines, evidently with the conflicts in Marawi in May 2017, and has already gained a foothold in other South Asian countries – most notably in Bangladesh and Pakistan which has witnessed the highest concentration in ISIS related attacks. The first direct ISIS planned (but foiled) attack was in June 2016. So far, India has served as a recruitment base for ISIS activities in other countries, but the risk towards India has increased as ISIS has shifted its focus to targets in India. This radicalization-process is partly facilitated by local ISIS-affiliated groups, radicalized individuals, returnees, and online propaganda as well as ISIS loss of physical territory in Iraq and Syria. Security reports highlight India's neighbouring states as a source of training grounds for radicalized Indians, in particular the Afghan-Pak region and Bangladesh.

Initially, the flow of recruited Indians was concentrated from the southern- and western states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra and Jammu Kashmir (but not exclusively), yet this pattern has been altered over time as recruits currently come from most states of the Indian subcontinent, but with less documented cases of recruitment in the seven north eastern states (this could be a sign of lack of security intelligence rather than understood as ISIS not being present). Online radicalization has been instrumental to this development, and internet activity related to ISIS has been noteworthy in the north-eastern state of Assam.

The high number of ISIS recruits stemming from the aforementioned states coincides with the local socio-political struggles and grievances experienced there. In brief, the southern states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala have each their own experiences with communist governance and localized extremist groups (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) and subsequently have a historical arms-length to the central government in New Delhi. The concentration of Muslims is higher in the northern states, in particular Jammu Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh, and the regions have a historical track record of religious-motivated violence and cross-border skirmishes. Especially Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) has emerged as a foothold for ISIS.

Additional cited grievances of the Muslim community, Dalit community and similar groups, relates to the Modi government and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) policies, which are largely perceived to be discriminatory towards Muslims and lower castes, hence the resistance towards the central government. In May 2016, in an attempt to reach out to India's Muslim community, ISIS released a video in which the group's fighters swore to avenge the Muslims victims of the Gujarat riots in 2002, where current Prime Minister Narendra Modi was chief

minister at the time. This, however, does not mean Indians who join ISIS are from backward background or Muslims per se, evidently with cases of high-educated suspects being arrested.

ISIS has also attempted to utilize the domestic struggles between government's forces and tribal communities and Maoist insurgency movements in the mineral-rich central parts of India, and the religious-struggle between Muslims and Hindus, largely fanned by the Modi government's policies. In addition, other conflicts such as the Rohingya crisis in Rakhine state in Myanmar and consequently the refugee-crisis in Bangladesh have emerged as a potential recruit-base for ISIS as it traffics Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar via Saudi Arabia to ISIS territories.

The degree of cooperation between ISIS and Maoist movements in India is hard to assess, and highly debatable due to the two organizations' nature. The two organizations are operating parallel to each other with both overlapping and contradictory interests. In April 2016, the Indian Minister of state for home affairs, Haribhai Parathibhai Chaudhary, stated that no nexus between ISIS and Maoists had come to notice of the government. However, captured ISIS-affiliated suspects have indicated that attempts to bridge the two organizations have been made. This correlates well with the notion of ISIS often utilizes local insurgency groups and networks.

Assessing the radicalization of Indians, their leanings towards ISIS, and sympathy towards the group's activities, is a complex exercise. Aside from socio-economic grievances, grassroots support for radical Islamic imperatives provides potential for ISIS to exploit for its own agenda. In the wake of the dislocation of ISIS in Iraq and Syria, the prospects are that ISIS *may* become more a kind to Al-Qaeda in the 1990s and start-2000s; reliant on its global network of radicalized individuals and allegiance claiming cells and focusing on the "far enemy", rather than establishing a substantial ground presence in India (though currently it remains conjecture). This would entail a shift from ISIS' objectives of "building and defending" a caliphate to accepting the allegiances of new provinces as well as establishing new theatres of action.

1.2 Combat indicators

The chronology of major ISIS-related activities and events are given in the Appendix at the end of the report. ISS Risk has been monitoring the development of ISIS and its activities on the Indian subcontinent since July 2014, and the subsequent assessment is based on those observations along with local supportive assets located in India. The combat indicators

illustrate ISIS' gradual but rapidly expanding ground-presence in India, evident with a continuous number of ISIS-affiliated Indian nationals being arrested in India; who either are on their way to ISIS battlefield; or returning to India via international routes. The subsequent allegiances pledged to ISIS by local Islamist terrorist organization and sympathizers combined with India being explicitly targeted by ISIS, is indicative of ISIS' impact on the domestic Islamic extremism.

1.3 Discernible patterns

At the surface, the tendency suggests that external terror groups such as ISIS, has altered and impacted the domestic terror threat level in India within a relatively short time. ISS Risk's assessment is based on discerning patterns and trends underscoring the development of threats which is imperative for mitigating risks. ISS Risk has singled out the following overall key observations related to ISIS activities in India since 2014:

- The general tendency and pattern suggest that ISIS is present in India, but in very limited numbers, yet growing.
- The overall regional pattern is suggestive of increasing Islamist radicalization and ISIS affiliations, yet compared with the patterns found at city-level in major Indian cities, the tendency and impact become less clear-cut.
- 2013-2016, ISIS made in-roads in India and successfully established recruitment networks.
- India's more prosperous and well-networked regions of Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Telangana have emerged as being prone to ISIS radicalization, when compared with the poorer northern states of Uttar Pradesh, Jammu-Kashmir, Bihar and West Bengal. The radicalization coincides and occurs within states which has experienced political conflict with the central government (in non-Bharatiya Janata Party majority areas); had a concentration of Maoist insurgents; and are embroiled in other conflicts (Jammu-Kashmir). This pattern has been altered over time, and now recruits come from all over India.
- India's counter-terrorism efforts between the central government and state governments have been strengthened and relatively successful in intercepting radicalized modules.



3. General observation and assessment

2.1 Online radicalization

The domestic threat from virtual recruitment and self-radicalization surged in 2014 as Indian nationals attempted to join ISIS, and a noteworthy tendency was online radicalization without ever having personal contact with a recruiter. ISIS' online propaganda campaign has been highly successful in attracting both local Indian Islamist extremist groups as well as recruiters, who have invoked the name of "ISIS" in order to recruit Indian Muslims. It is estimated that 30,000 Indians are in contact with ISIS.

The online radicalization of Indian nationals contrasts the notion that 'mere consumption' radicalizes individuals, while it supports the argument that the internet facilitates contact between people and real-world extremists' networks that people can plug themselves into, which eventually can facilitate their physical support and/or travel to ISIS-controlled territories. Nearly half of all arrested ISIS modules or affiliates from India, have been related to a particular Karnataka-born online recruiter, Shafi Armar (also known as Yusuf-al-Hindi). Reportedly, Armar is still alive in Syria from where he recruits online (though it has been contested whether he is alive or dead).

As India has become targeted by ISIS, arrests of radicalized individuals and subsequent investigations have revealed that Indian recruits of ISIS had been instructed in how to make bombs through the internet by the ISIS's foreign handlers as well as instructing Indian recruits to pinpoint potential targets in Mumbai, Delhi and the popular tourist destination of Goa. Moreover, ISIS has also lured hackers with 1000\$ rewards for hacking into government websites and steal sensitive data.

Till now, known numbers of sympathizers and recruits have been identified as coming from; Kerala (37), Telangana (21), Maharashtra (19), Karnataka (16), Uttar Pradesh (15), Madhya Pradesh (6), Tamil Nadu (5), Gujarat (4), Uttarakhand (3), Bengal (3), Jammu-Kashmir (2), Andhra Pradesh (1), Delhi (1), Bihar (1), and Rajasthan (1). Hence, based on numbers alone, the tendency suggests that states in the south and west have been particular prone to ISIS-inspired radicalization.

These states also represent the most well-connected and networked parts of the India, with Uttar Pradesh being the exception, along with having tech-savvy populations. The tendency observed here, lends itself to similar patterns observed in more liberal and developed countries like Tunisia, Morocco, France, Belgium, Scandinavian countries, and Australia, which have proven to be the most vulnerable to the ISIS radicalization-wave 2014-2017.

Examples of ISIS utilizing domestic fears emerged in June 2014 when a map of the envisioned caliphate, which included India, was released in the media². Half a year later, ISIS installed former Tehrik-e-Taliban commander, Hafiz Saeed Khan, as governor (or *wali*) of the so-called “Khorasan Province”, which includes India. Yet, this propaganda appears not to have impacted significantly in India.

Regardless of the immediate effect of the released map and the proclaimed caliphate, by September 2014, Abu Muhammad al-Adnani called on supporters who were unable to join ISIS and the caliphate, to carry out attacks wherever they were located with whatever means available. Between June 2014 and February 2017, 143 direct ISIS or ISIS-related terror attacks were carried out in 29 countries. In December 2014, the Indian authorities banned ISIS as an organization and closed down 32 ISIS-affiliated websites which spread its ideology and functioned as online recruitment-platforms. ISIS has utilized Skype, Signal, Trillion, Telegram and similar cost-free communication apps and Tutanota, a German-designed app for encrypted email.

2.2 Indian Islamist terror groups and ISIS

The number of Indians directly related to ISIS and Abu-Bakr al-Baghdadi’s terror outfit is estimated to be around 100-140 (132 named), i.e. relatively insignificant proportions when compared with the number of foreign fighters from Europe and Russia; the number has however been increasing. Yet, it also suggests that IS has only succeeded in making scant in-roads as compared with Europe, North America, Russia, Central Asia, Southeast Asia and the MENA region. Some Indians were even radicalized overseas in Singapore, Australia, UK and the US.

Some radicalized individuals can be expected to be combat-trained, capable of blending in with the general population, radicalize and recruit more people, call upon “ sleeper cells ” and “ lone wolves ” to carry out attacks. In addition, those intercepted in transit to Iraq and Syria may be frustrated as they were ready to engage in battle but did not get the chance – all factors which should not be ignored or overlooked.

In terms of returning fighters, the much-feared ‘ wave ’ of returning fighters to the West (which so far only has been a trickle), the issue for India is comparatively less due to the low number of radicalized people going abroad, yet as the recruitment base of ISIS is intact and hence radicalized elements are already in India, the risk of attacks is increasing as ISIS

² June 2014 saw several different maps released by different actors such as right-wing extremists and competing groups. It is hard to discern which map was actually released by ISIS, as the general media relied on Twitter. The impact was nevertheless enhanced and placed India on ISIS map.

continues to hold influence over its sympathizers. The threat to India is not on par with the terrorist challenge facing Europe. The remaining regional provinces of ISIS, known as “*wilayat*”, are not large enough to take over the leadership as ISIS is retreating from Iraq and Syria, yet they can offer local scope and focus for returnees and assist them to act on their own or collaborate with other returning comrades or new recruits.

Notwithstanding online self-radicalization, ISIS has a preference for utilizing pre-existing groups (especially as ISIS’ name invokes attention to less-significant groups). Approximately one-third of Indian IS sympathizers were affiliated with other organizations such as AuT, IM, SIMI or JKH, and also Bangladesh-based ISIS-affiliated Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) has emerged as a transnational threat to India. Reportedly, AuT has funnelled recruits to ISIS’ operations in Afghanistan.

Kerala has emerged a potential hotspot for ISIS as recruitment base, as already-radicalized Indians from Kerala have joined ISIS in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan and are now returning to Kerala and continuing the recruitment process. Moreover, the IM has a substantial presence in Kerala and the connection between IM and ISIS has been reconfirmed with the killing of a known IM militant, Muhammed Sajid (though an Uttar Pradesh-native), in Kobani, Syria. In addition, SIMI too has a strong presence which could facilitate the radicalization of youth toward ISIS or provide a recruitment platform. Further still, radicalization also has a tendency of spreading via school, family or neighbourhood relations, resulting in cells like Ansarul Khalifa Kerala. Contrasting online radicalization, a large number of recruiters has been successful in recruiting Indian Muslims through word of mouth rather than internet as well.

2.3 ISIS and Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh

In April 2016, the Emir of ISIS in Bangladesh, Abu Ibrahim al-Hanif, stated in an interview featured in ISIS’ monthly magazine that ISIS will carry out attacks in India in collaboration with local Islamist groups from Bangladesh and Pakistan. ISIS wields significant influence over Islamist terror groups located in Bangladesh; in particular, JMB has become a threat to India as it has altered its tactics. In early December 2018, JMB released India-centric literature targeting the leadership of Rashtriya Swayamsevak (RSS), hence diverting terror activities from Bangladesh to India. In attempting to expand JMB’s activities in Assam and West Bengal, the literature aimed at radicalizing the youth of India’s Bengali-speaking Muslim community by dubbing the Modi government as anti-Muslim and called for actions against the RSS leadership too. Additionally, the Sangh Parivar and its affiliated organizations such as Durga Vahini and Vishwa Hindu Parishad, has also been cited as legitimate targets by JMB. The call to violence against high-profile Indian political targets

indicate a strategic shift in focus from 'a Sharia-driven Muslim Bangladesh', to well-thought out establishment of a violent guerrilla-style group.

The intensive anti-terror efforts undertaken by the Bangladesh governments in the wake of the July 1st 2016 attack on Holey Artisan Bakery in Dhaka, may be explanatory for the tactical shift in focus of the JMB as the group has been hit hard and subsequently sees India as a new breeding ground. More recently, on 12th January three JMB members were killed near PM Hasina's office in Dhaka. India support the government of PM Sheikh Hasina, but her government has been slow in acting against ISIS and its affiliates; something that could allow for co-coordinated transnational attacks on India in future.

Moreover, the JMB based in India has previously been linked with the Pakistani intelligence agency, Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI), and reportedly, JMB in India lacked the crucial infrastructure and relied on ISIS-funds in order to operate effectively.

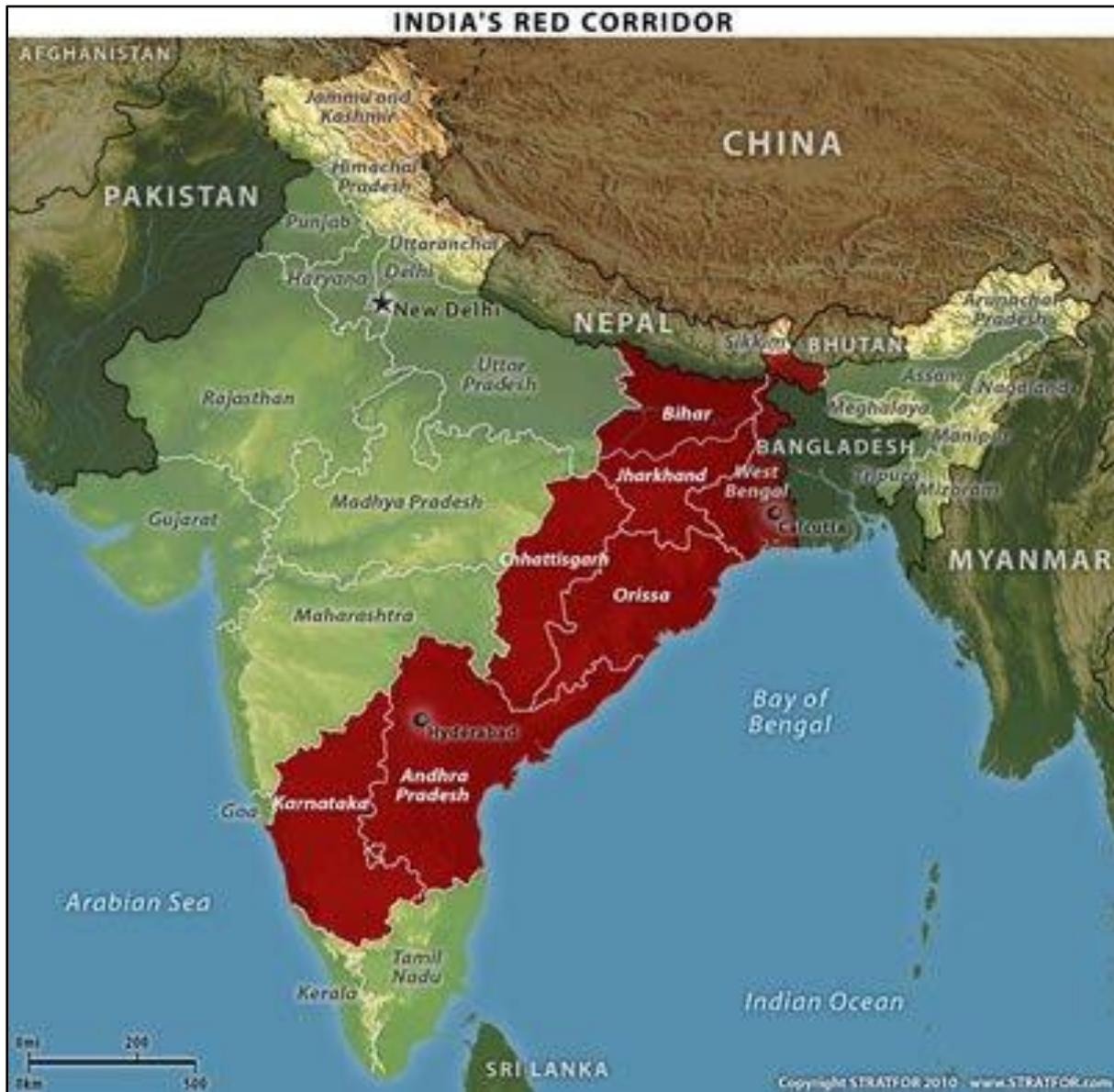
2.4 Rohingya crisis as catalyst for ISIS

The Rohingya crisis carries serious ramifications for South Asia and has provided ISIS with a potential recruitment base as the crisis has transcended into a transnational crisis. The hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees stuck in camps on the Bangladesh-Myanmar border, offers ISIS potential sympathizers which can be trained and redirected to terror attacks in India, facilitated by its international network. Despite the on-going talks between the Burmese and Bangladeshi governments about repatriation of the Rohingya refugees and the related propaganda, it is questionable when this may happen (and to what degree). Hence, the Rohingyas remain unwanted in both countries and could fall prey to ISIS or similar Islamist groups operating in the area. Insofar recruited to an extremist Islamist group, the access to India via the north-eastern states would be nearby.

2.5 ISIS – Maoist alliance?

As ISIS gradually establishes itself in India, the question of a tactical alliance between ISIS, its affiliates and sympathizers, and Indian Maoist insurgents in the red corridor becomes relevant. The speculations about a potential alliance or overlap in terms weapons procurement, training and similar logistics has gained traction despite of the Indian government's claim to the contrary in April 2016. However, by July the National Investigation Agency (NIA) submitted a charge sheet before Delhi's special court, which stressed that ISIS was attempting to procure weapons from Maoist and utilize their logistics as well as carry out terror attacks. Other potential entrance points for ISIS to India is the eastern route via Assam, Bihar and West Bengal, where the latter state has witnessed a high concentration of sleeper

cells in the border-region with Bangladesh where ISIS is already present. In the light of this geography, reports have suggested a potential ISIS- Maoist connection in the red corridor spanning from south- to north India and Nepal. Till now, attacks have been limited and any such relations remain conjecture.



Yet with the retreat of ISIS in Iraq and Syria and the subsequent targeting of India, it opens the question of how feasible an alliance between ISIS and Maoists would be? Firstly, as it is hard to discern, other allegation of alliances between Maoists and Islamist terrorist organizations have occurred in the past. In 2010, a potential alliance between Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Maoists in Chhattisgarh emerged, which would also imply a potential connection between the Pakistani ISI and the Maoist. Furthermore, reports highlights ISI as a third-party entrant to India's seven north-eastern state being plausible, as the Paresh

Baruah-led faction of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), or People's Liberation Army of Manipur, would accept assistance from ISI in their struggle. However, though these speculations and suggestions may be merited to some degree, they also ignore certain factors. The Maoist has openly rejected the claims by the Indian government about a potential Maoist-ISI connection, and blamed the former for hatching conspiracy theories with Maoists and Islamist terrorist groups.

This should be understood in the light of the Maoist as an organization and their ideology which is revolutionary, national, communal, secular and communist in nature; any nexus with terrorist or terrorist-affiliated force like ISIS, ISI or Al- Qaeda, would undermine the Maoists' credibility in a domestic context. The Maoist primarily derives their strength from the masses of the tribal and rural heartlands and may lose the support of these groups insofar the Maoists becomes associated with unpopular forces. Hence, any alliance with ISIS would likely jeopardize their support base. Moreover, ideological support by Left-wing intellectuals would also be eroded by a ISIS connection. The Maoists' ideological doctrine is fundamentally different to ISIS' as the Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is focused on class-conflict and disregards religion, which is the antithesis to the communal-terrorist groups such as ISIS as well as the concept of jihad which also stand in contradiction to the Maoists' ideational position.

Regardless, there may be overlaps in terms of interests between ISIS and Maoists, as both are fighting the Indian government. Other declared objectives would be fighting imperialism and be reactionary within social and cultural aspects. Both ISIS and the Maoists are anti-imperialists, yet the Maoists do not align with Muslim fundamentalism within social and cultural matters.

Common ground should however not be overestimated as an explicit alliance with either ISIS or ISI would pose an existential threat to the Maoist. The Maoist is traditionally an indigenous insurgency, based on grievances caused by the government (or lack of same) and tribal- and backwards castes communities' struggle. Though the Kashmiri insurgents have the support of the Maoist, it is not to be confused with support for Islamist extremism; rather it is support of the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. Thus, an alliance with ISIS would run contrary to these supports due to ISIS' brutal and fundamental terrorist tactics.

Insofar an alliance or collaboration should materialize anyway; it would benefit ISIS in terms of logistics, ammunition, training, arms and sanctuary. Also, if ISIS could utilize logistics and/or procure arms from the Maoist, it would rejuvenate the latter as it has come under



increasing pressure by Indian government forces, not only in terms of finances but also cadres. Especially in Maharashtra, where security forces and state government has extended its successful surrender-policy “Aatmasamarpan” scheme till August 28th 2019. It remains debatable whether the Maoist Central Committee would succumb to financial offerings by ISIS. Another factor is the Maoist hierarchy’s control over its lower cadres, which potentially could be tempted to join a tactical alliance with ISIS or breakaway entirely, due to the relative popularity of ISIS as well as internal issues of the Maoist movement.

2.6 India’s counter-terror capabilities

India has not been actively involved in fighting ISIS on a global scale yet. So far, joint US-India counter-operations have taken place. The NIA- CIA counter-terrorism operation of January 2016, where NIA received intelligence from CIA about a north Indian ISIS cell, was successfully in capturing the ISIS modules. Yet, from an American perspective, intelligence-sharing may be a one-way street. As ISIS poses an ever-growing threat to India with virtual self-radicalization being a central element to the continued growth, chances of a kinetic attack increase as India becomes further involved in the global fight against terrorism and ISIS (particularly in South Asia), via collaboration with the US. The Trump administration has prioritized the fight against terrorism and will likely interact positively with other countries which have made similar priorities. Increased anti-ISIS measures will be ‘fuel on the fire’ for radicalized elements, evidently with a 2016 ISIS propaganda video featuring Fahad Tanvir Sheikh, in which he stated the avenge of violence against Muslims as well as warned India. South Asia remains critical in the fight against terrorism, which offers India a significant role in the US regional strategy. The 2014 Joint Statement identifies areas of collaboration such as, exchange of terrorist watch lists, yet nothing concrete has materialized till now. Despite of this and ISIS growing numbers in India, only one ISIS-accredited attack has occurred. The pipe-bombing of a train in Madhya Pradesh in March 2017 along with numerous ISIS-affiliated arrests suggests that a policy shift from ‘soft’ to ‘hard’ is warranted.

As pointed out above, the Rohingya crisis poses a significant challenge to India’s external intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), and its over-stretched security forces. The RAW has found it highly challenging to checkmate cross-border terror groups, especially if they are patronized by ISI. The RAW has experienced setbacks, one of the most noteworthy was the 1999 Kargil war, yet under the Modi government with intelligence Officer Ajit Doval as National Security Advisor, RAW has been strengthened by the Central Government, including external collaboration with Israel’s Mossad force since 2014. By April 2016, ISIS instructed its recruiters and sympathizers to keep low profile in India, due to on-going NIA crackdowns.

Despite the relatively negative future outlook for India in terms of terrorism, it should be noted that India has a positive track record of countering ISIS threats. 85 of 142 known ISIS sympathizers of Indian origin have been arrested. A significant number of Indians, who joined ISIS abroad and later returned to India, were intercepted at Indian airports, while a number were caught in transit in other countries and subsequently deported back to India.



4. Regional observations and assessment

When disseminating the ISIS' influence in major Indian cities, a more nuanced pattern emerges which compliments the general observations listed above. The city-level assessment is informed by ISS Risk's assets on the ground in India.

4.1 North India

Key takeaways:

- Political instability – increased religious identity politics (in particular after the election of BJP in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh).
- Due to the heightened attention accorded to New Delhi, the probability of a terrorist incident targeting soft alternatives near the city is magnified.
- Significant lacuna exists in the intelligence monitoring and civic infrastructure abilities to respond to such as incidents in the border districts.
- Lack of corporate partnership – disruption along social and communal lines as potential fallout from terrorist incident is deemed a credible possibility.



The National Capital Region (NCR) and New Delhi has witnessed a certain sense of resentment over the treatment of Muslims, with issues of banning the consumption of- and trade with beef along with anti-Muslim communal violence across India, but this has not translated into particular vulnerability of the Muslim youth of the NCR in terms of joining extremist groups. Accordingly, the influx of foreigners and notably fractions of Afghan and Bangladeshi migrants, have been associated with extremism and indoctrination of youths.

In terms of other external elements, Afghan and Bangladesh refugees has been highlighted as worrisome, yet their capabilities are limited and in insignificant numbers. Accordingly, their activities are limited to espousing radical ideology. Rohingyas arrested in New Delhi have been unrelated to extremist activity.

Primary areas of concern identified in northern India include Jammu-Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh (notably the in Western Uttar Pradesh, including Deoband, Meerut and Muzaffarpur), the Bihar- Nepal border areas, and the Nuh district in Haryana.

The security perception of radicalization posed to New Delhi is limited, though areas such as Nizamuddin and the Okhla-Jamia have emerged as areas of concern, no significant impact has been determined based on official records. Relatedly, despite ISIS' usage of online-propaganda targeting especially the 18-25-year-olds, local cyber-cafes claim that local residents are less-likely to be affected by online-radicalization and stresses that migrants based in aforementioned areas, would be more prone to radicalization. Moreover, despite many young people have been detained for possessing extremist material, they have been let off due to no connection with extremists or evidence of greater conspiracy. Many argued they had the material (CDs and digital media) out of curiosity. Mostly, these people are handed over to community leaders for counselling and not continuously observed. The low levels of arrests in the NCR have been cited as being indicative of lack of radicalization modules.

In terms of trans-national terrorist groups in New Delhi, the impact has been insignificant. Operational tasking has primarily come from IM and SIMI, both indigenous groups. Some reports of ISIS-related online material being found in New Delhi have occurred but nothing indicates a preference among the victims of radicalization so far. Insights on the radicalization process highlights that young people who have been arrested (including those who planned attacks in the city), were more attracted by the glamour and a criminal mindset, rather than being ideologically motivated towards any particular group. Even though the media have cited the presence of Al- Qaeda in New Delhi, local officers denies such presence. Confusion on the matter is caused by the interchangeably usage of terrorist groups' names by authorities, and insofar a member is caught, it is largely considered an aberration. Hence, the primary risk of radicalization remains local-led and young people are more likely to be motivated to participate in indigenous group, regardless of propaganda from ISIS or similar groups.

In addition, as stressed by a senior police official, the NCR is not a hotbed for extremist activity and unlikely to be so, considering the middle-income opportunities and intelligence efforts which could deter young people from extremist activity. Other factors point to the modus operandi of terror groups such as Hizbul Mujahideen, where New Delhi is likely to be used as a transit point or a haven. These groups don't conduct operations in New Delhi and thus don't have local funding sources. The most likely funding is from 'hawala' sources (illicit banking channels). Operational capacity of groups remains limited and due to the increasing efforts by the authorities, attacks have been absent in recent years. Noteworthy efforts include the establishment of a Joint Intelligence Centre by the Indian authorities, and the aligning of the counter-terrorism efforts between local law enforcement,

the state government and the central governments. The central government is responsible for police functions in New Delhi, while satellite cities have been bolstered by intelligence inputs. Political differences between the central governments and state government have not emerged as implicating counter-terrorism efforts.

4.2 East India

Key takeaways:

- (Critical) Increased impetus to smuggling and cross-border activity.
- (Critical) - Spike in communal activities in the state of West Bengal will contribute to the radicalization process.
- (Moderate) - Radicalization among the local youth alleged to be exaggerated. Most of the radicalized suspects arrested in the state came from Bangladesh.
- (Low) - The authorities are reportedly highly pro-active in monitoring and foiling plots. There is improved cooperation reported by the experts in the state and the central government.



West Bengal have seen an increase in Islamist extremism in the region, and there is an on-going process of placing the responsibility with the policies of the ruling All India Trinamool Congress (TMC). Kolkatta, the capital of West Bengal, has however not seen an increase in Islamist activity despite reports of increased illegal infiltration from Bangladesh. The current extremist threat in the state is subject to overhype by certain sections. The most pressing issues are increased smuggling and fake currency activities in the rural parts of West Bengal, which only amounts to an incidental threat to Kolkatta rather than a primary threat. A hike in communal tension caused by external elements has occurred in some areas of West Bengal but these are the exception to the norm. An additional factor that may contribute to the communal tension is the mushrooming of Madrassas. Yet, this development is primarily related to the inept educational system, according to local sources.

Areas of socio-economic concern have been identified in North 24 Parganas, Nadia, Murshidabad in the central part and Uttar Dinajpur and Malda. Some areas of concern are also deemed as being potential safe havens for terror outfits and their activities, these

include Burdwan, Murshidabad, North 24 Parganas, Maldah and South 24 Parganas. The areas adjoining the Bangladesh border are particular vulnerable to smuggling and cross-border activity by terror outfits. Kolkata is claimed to function primarily as a transit route.

In regards to radicalization, it is primary attributed to the infiltration of Bangladeshis with insignificant local involvement. In addition, the socio-economic situation in West Bengal and Bangladesh has been highlighted by arrestees as contributing to the radicalization levels in West Bengal. The suspect was lured into extremism via a criminal background, which suggests the primary motivation was financial incentives rather than extremist ideology. Accordingly, the suspect argued there is a perceptible difference in radicalization pattern between Bengali and Bangladeshi youth, and that situation in West Bengal could improve insofar the state government addresses social and economic conditions of the rural economy.

Contrary to the cited radicalization levels in the media, ISS Risk's local assets suggested that there is little evidence to support such. Rather, incidents of extremism are blown out of proportions and connected to personal disputes. Reports of activities by extremist groups have been described as a spill-over of the violence in Bangladesh. However, the threat perception for Kolkata and urban centres of the region, remains relatively unaffected by the wider extremism developments. The last major attack was in 2002 and planned attacks in recent time have been successfully foiled, something which can be attributed to improved police intelligence. Other factors indicate that Kolkata has emerged as a transit point for Islamist groups, similar to New Delhi, and due to this utility, the city is not targeted in order to avoid further attention to their activities.

Yet still, the tendency of extremist propaganda continues to be skewed towards youth as in other locations. This has however not translated into noteworthy action. No quantitative data on Bengali youth being involved in activities of operational groups in the region is currently available. Most arrests undertaken in the region are invariably connected to Bangladeshi nationals.

The impact of online radicalization is comparatively lower in West Bengal, where radicalization is a more traditional, Madrassa- and community-led process with direct recruitment being active. Yet still, extremists in the region are known to rely on instant messaging services such as WhatsApp to circulate propaganda material.

The radicalization method is not believed to be decentralized but rather hierarchical with control of operations. It is not definitively clear whether local youth have joined transnational

groups, but reportedly, their motivation is likely to be related to smuggling and fund-raising activities for the militant groups, rather than combat. It is understood that all active groups in the region are involved in smuggling activity, fake currency and cattle trade, as these are major revenue sources.

It is believed that most of the operating modules in the region are ' sleeper cells ' and that no high-rank leadership figure is based in West Bengal, but more likely to be located in the vicinity of the border due to escape options.

In terms of trans-national groups, reports from the region indicate a competing influence from ISIS and Al-Qaeda, though none of the groups can effectively claim to hold the upper hand. Other regional outfits such as Harkat Ul Jihad Islami (Bangladesh), Jaamat Ul Muhajjheed (Bangladesh), and the Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), are all Bangladesh-based.

Since the 2014 blast in Burdwan, the authorities have improved their internal monitoring efforts and become pro-active in their response capacity towards these groups. A degree of disparity in terms of threat perception and level of radicalization within Bengal, persists between the state government and the central government. The central government agencies are more focused, professional and well-coordinated in their approach vis-à-vis extremist groups in the region. The state government is allegedly responsible for intelligence gathering. Reportedly, state-level intelligence departments have cultivated links with cattle smugglers in the state to obtain leads on possible infiltration and exfiltration routes utilized by banned outfits from Bangladesh. In addition, the political climate in West Bengal cannot be said to implicate counter-terrorism efforts. The BJP has not been able to influence the local political outlook, and incidents of communal violence appear related to local disputes rather than political hues to violence.

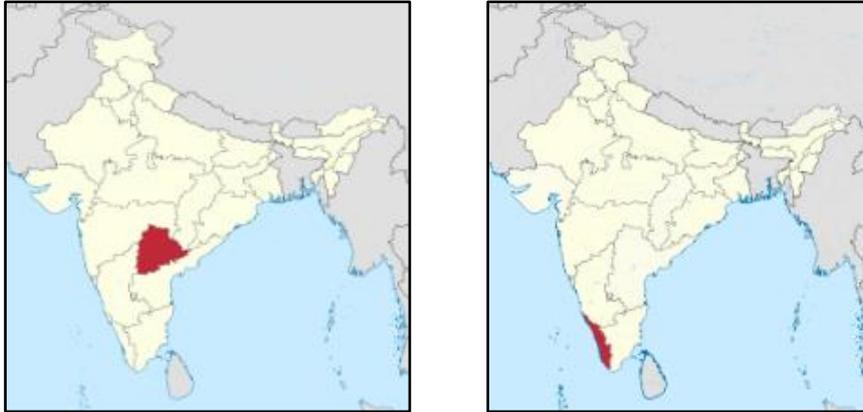
4.3 South India

Key takeaways:

- Both Kerala and Telangana are prone to Islamist extremism due to significant Muslim populations and socio-economic factors.
- The immediate threat of radicalization and violence is 'moderate' for Telangana and 'high' for Kerala.
- The Telangana state authorities have been praised for their counter-radicalization efforts

which have impacted on the threat levels.

- The Kerala state authorities' capabilities have been compromised by ruling party politics.



In Kochi, the state capital of Kerala, extremism has been growing since 2003 with explicit and subtle forms. The targeting of minority Christian communities and attacks on right-wing leaders are increasing in frequency and scale. Subtle efforts include converting individuals to Islam, marrying non-Muslims for conversion purposes, and the construction of more mosques, granting social doles, and restricting the functioning of other community activities. Such extremist activity is reportedly rampant in areas such as Malappuram, Kasargod, Perumbavoor, Aluva and Kollam (but not limited to). North Kerala has emerged as an area of concern.

For Hyderabad, the joint-capital of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, radicalization levels are moderate and generally concentrated in the old parts of the city. About half of the total population of Muslims in the state is residing in Hyderabad district. Of the 44.65lakh Muslims in Telangana, 17.13lakh lives in the Hyderabad district, which makes up 43% of the total Muslim population of the state. The city is a vortex of Islamist politics as practiced by the All India Majilis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) and the party has held the Lok Sabha seat for the Hyderabad constituency since 1984. In the context of wider regional radicalization concerns, Hyderabad has emerged a hub as many radicalization incidents have been linked to foreign-funded cells and individuals who have been radicalized via contacts based outside of India. Due to historical and social connections with the Arab world, both Hyderabad and Kerala are connected to developments in West Asia, and thus are vulnerable to social media messages which are shared by the diaspora located there. There has been a noteworthy influx of foreign funding for Madrassas in both Hyderabad and Kerala. In addition,

The radicalization process, however, is disputable with some experts citing the process

starting from school (notably in Kerala), while others emphasizes the process to start in mosques. Schools are reportedly managed by Muslims in Kerala, which can form basis for radicalization. In particular, youth visits to the Gulf countries as well as being targeted for exploitation by online scouts, have emerged as areas of concern. Despite the general tendency of targeting youth, it cannot be said to target a particular sub-group of youth, though, most recruits have Sunni background.

In Telangana, it is claimed, a notable portion of radicalization is occurring within the prison system when youths detained for petty crimes become exposed to radicalization. This is despite of Telangana's prison system being highlighted as the most progressive as well as being a role model for the rest of India.

Relatedly, for Hyderabad, there is a general consensus that counter-radicalization and anti-terrorism efforts by Telangana police are among the best in India, and thus the risk perception is shaped accordingly. The primary area of concern is limited to the old city area. This, coupled with the pro-active measures of the authorities and the usage of technology to protect significant sites, mitigates the threat index.

For Kerala, the threat perception is high as the security index is poor due to increased incidents of extremism along with incidents of communal tension in major urban centres. Despite no large-scale attacks have taken place in Kerala, the perception is that cities in the state are vulnerable to attack. Also, the presence of groups such as Indian Union Muslim League, People's Democratic Party, and National development front have been identified as concerns to state security due to their precedent for violence.

Some of the elements have been linked with transnational groups, though this connection has been highlighted by experts as being very limited with only a few incidents of direct relation to Al-Qaeda and ISIS.

The primary scope of concern stems from local Islamist organizations like the IM and SIMI. Though cases of Kerala youth attempting to travel to Pakistan are known, the bottom line of concern is radicalized and operating youths in a local environment. Patterns suggest that local radicalized modules find their information online and then get introduced to ISIS ideology, which they try to re-create in their area of influence. This has materialized in the form of banning western education, the torching of liquor shops, and promoting the wearing of burkhas.

In Hyderabad, there are known cases of individuals attempting to join ISIS abroad, though in the broader context of the Muslim population of the city, the cases appear to be an

aberration. Authorities have not emphasized these incidents. The police are active in monitoring and have been foiling attacks, yet, a considerable and credible risk of further radicalization exist in parts of the city which stems from close-knit status, communal tension and victimhood narratives. This is grounded in a sense of alienation among the Muslim community as 'expected social and economic benefits' has not materialized. Minority areas have in general been bereft of civic amenities and dearth of economic opportunities. Other cited influences, are Arab cultural elements and the influx of Arab-funded Madrassas which further enables radicalization among youths.

A particular threat posed to Hyderabad is online radicalization due to its tech savvy residents. At least one known instance of a planned attack had received instruction online. Thus, in terms of modus operandi, Hyderabad is comparatively more prone to online radicalization while traditional indoctrination has prevailed in Kerala. This does however not suggest a breakdown in law and order, but rather points to socio-economic and political circumstances which had been aided by political ambivalence in support of Islamist parties. It has been observed that extremist groups operating in the states have displayed a tendency of being more organized- and hierarchy driven in Kerala than in Hyderabad. One perspective highlights the cultural colonization in Kerala as being explanatory thereof, as the Muslim population accounts for 26% in Kerala and run six newspapers, namely the Chandrika, Madhyamam, Varthamaanam, Siraj, Tejas, Suprabhatham, whereas the Hindu right-wing BJP only runs a single newspaper- Janmabhoomi. The funding for such activities is known to come from the Middle East. Consequential, the risk of lone-wolf attacks is markedly higher in Hyderabad due to online radicalization as well as the focus of authorities being on organized structures.

The chances of externally based groups gaining a foothold have been mitigated by the reverses suffered by these groups lately. The risk of radicalization is persistent and an outlet for extremist activities is likely to be domestic-oriented rather than towards external parties. The likelihood of violence exists, however, mostly in pockets of the Hyderabad. Radicalized individuals have primarily been involved in spreading radical messages, organizing movements and warning against secularism.

Comparatively, the threat of violence is more significant in Kerala than in Hyderabad, where counter-terrorism efforts have been praised. Kerala is more likely to emerge as a safe haven for external elements. In Hyderabad, funding activities have not been reported yet, smuggling activities (mostly drugs) by Islamist groups is suspected but currently unverified. In Kerala, known activities suggest that Arab activity haven been limited to funding

operations.

An additional concern shared with other states, is the influx of Bangladeshi migrant workers and the proliferation of Rohingya Muslim camps (notably in Hyderabad). Though no terror-connection to these foreigners have been confirmed, there are indications of engagement in criminal activities, and that they harbour potential cadre for Islamist groups. In Kerala, it has been reported that youths that has been working overseas in Arab countries, have returned with a cultural outlook which resembles the host countries.

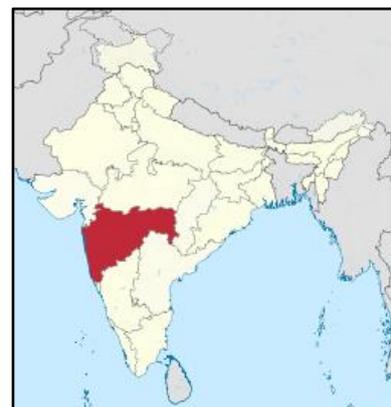
Intelligence agencies, state governments and the central governments' efforts in active monitoring activities of groups involved in the region have generally been highlighted and deemed capable of responding to the threat, though Kerala's state government ability to respond has been questioned. This questioning primarily stems from the political climate which may have compromised state law enforcement efforts which have not been adequate enough vis-à-vis challenges posed within Kerala

Telangana authorities' counter-terrorism capabilities have been acknowledged, especially its online monitoring activities. Notably, the infiltration of social media pages and effective rehabilitation of youth is worthwhile noting. The authorities work with developers of chat applications such as Telegram, Trilian, Surespot and Nimbus, as militant groups have asked their cadres to shun known applications. The cyber-cell authorities in Telangana are particularly active in counselling 'vulnerable' youths and involving their parents, peers and community elders in such efforts. Active monitoring of websites and support in spreading counter-narratives in chat rooms and corporate outreach program in vulnerable zones. Also, increasing the level of interaction with 'moderate' groups, NGOs and civil society to track and tackle radicalization countering extremist ideology of ISIS by propagating 'moderate' interpretations of Islam.

4.4 West India

Key takeaways:

- The general threat picture of Mumbai is misleading due to previous cases of attacks.
- Mumbai as the commercial capital of India and transit point, has been successful in mitigating the risk of radicalization, despite the threat of online radicalization



remains persistent.

- Counter-terrorism efforts have benefitted from same party ruling in state government and central government.

Adding nuances to the general view of Mumbai and the western part of India as being a 'hotbed' of extremism, experts have highlighted that despite a number of radicalized youth from the region have travelled to conflict zones in Syria and Iraq, it would be a misleading categorization. Overall, the level of communal violence in the state has decreased significantly with some reports suggesting a 50% drop in violence in four years. This development is mostly attributed to an enhanced living environment, with the exception being caused by the imposition of restriction on the sale of beef and cattle.

In terms of radicalization, known cases of radicalized individuals travelling overseas exist, but experts point to the radicalization process being characterized by close-knit personal relations. Close friendships of the youth involved, local businessmen relations, along with incidents of being mis-led into believing they were going to meet women they had befriended online are among some of the incidents. Other factors of influence suggest the 2001 Gujarat riots still being utilized by extremist groups for radicalization purposes as the issue continues to remain emotional, yet local Muslims are claimed not to be vulnerable. Notwithstanding the Arab connection and the significance of right-wing Hindutva, experts stress that the level of radicalized youth is an aberration. Radicalization is primarily skewed towards the youth though no sub-group in particular appears to have been targeted per se. Rather, the tendency supports issues related to socio-economic factors such as regional urban poverty rates among Muslims (which are among the highest in India), along with the perceived denial of opportunities and the sense of being prosecuted, could nurture radicalization. Geographical areas of concern have been identified as being Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Pune and Aurangabad, yet assessing and ranking the degree of radicalization and outreach is currently not possible.

In terms of Islamist activity, the primary risk is domestic and stems from IM. Transnational groups only got limited attraction though Al-Qaeda has periodically dominated news headlines. Other groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), are known to have sleeper cells in Mumbai, yet authorities have been successful in restricting LeT and its supporters' activities. An additional modus operandi is the criminal underworld nexus which partly provides funding for terrorist groups. One example of such is Dawood Ibrahim, a Pakistan-based international crime lord who continues to operate in Mumbai and surrounding cities. In regards to other external elements and foreigners who could pose a risk to security, the

tendency of the threat landscape for Mumbai as a commercial capital of India does not indicate deviations for any aforementioned nationalities (Arabs, Bangladeshis etc.). Police officials also stresses that no relation between Rohingyas and terror outfit have been established.

As for the groups operating in the region, funding is secured through a variety of sources with the majority diverted through 'hawala' activities, as well as smuggling operations and percentage cuts from organized crime. The financing of Islamic NGOs and individuals happens via cash transfers from donors in West Asia.

The radicalization process has largely shifted online though initial stages continuing to be community-led and individual specific. Social media has gained significant traction in influencing suspects, and it has been alleged that ISIS recruiters have attempted to lure youth to join their ranks through honey traps. Most radicalized youth are from poor socio-economic backgrounds who have been enticed by power, money or similar, when joining militant ranks. No cases of financial incentives have been reported despite rumours thereof. However, returnees have testified that they suffered during their time abroad and had been misled by online propaganda.

Despite the youth is being exposed extremist material from a range of sources, it has been pointed out that people are unlikely to differentiate between the groups. However, after being sufficiently radicalized, they may join a group oversea, irrespective of the name, or be urged to carry out attacks against 'non-believers' in their home country. A noticeable example is the dozen youth that went overseas and joined ISIS. At least one has been confirmed killed while two have returned. Moreover, as pointed out by a police official, as relatives and friends know the fate of these youth, they may not be motivated to join extremist groups. As for the region's intelligence agencies, state government and central government's counter-terrorism efforts; efforts have proved largely successful in combating the risk of radicalization. The synergy in collaboration has partially been attributed to ruling state government and central government, which both are governed by BJP. The police have made efforts in community outreach and identify gaps in the system which allowed previous suspects to leave India without causing suspicion. Yet, gaps in online monitoring persist as this domain has still not ceded control from extremists.



5. Conclusion

In assessing the threat and impact posed by Islamist extremism found domestically in India as well as external groups, the general scope of focus has been situated within the broader gambit of the geopolitical situation found in MENA and the dislocation of ISIS from its territorial 'caliphate' in Syria and Iraq. The emphasis of ISIS leaders has been on building and defending the caliphate, rather than following Al-Qaeda's model of focusing on the 'far enemy'. Yet, ISIS concept of expansion has moved from accepting the allegiances of new territorial provinces to the creation of new theatres of action. This development blends in with the extremist activity already found in India, and the indications are that ISIS has made inroads on the Indian subcontinent, yet the primary hotbeds for Islamist extremism is located at the borders of India, in Bangladesh and the Afghan-Pak region.

Disseminating the impact up till now, ISS Risk has taken into account observations at the geopolitical level as well as local level, and in doing so, a more accurate and nuanced picture of the current risks facing India have been identified. In sum, while acknowledging that this analysis only comprises a sample of some actual ISIS affiliated individuals and groups in India, a few tentative conclusions may be deducted;

- **ISIS's unique online propaganda** exploitation has spearheaded its way into India, by radicalizing individuals and groups alike and for both to garner attention. There threat posed by online radicalization is not evenly distributed across India, with the tech-savvy parts of the population in Hyderabad emerging a more vulnerable as compared to Kerala where radicalization efforts are more community-led. Hence, it can be deducted that radicalization results from a combination of online and traditional efforts, which has spear-headed ISIS entrance into the region. However, the counter-terrorism efforts have actively mitigated the threat of online radicalization.
- **The comparatively low number of Indians who have joined directly joined ISIS** may be attributable various factors such as, already belonging to pre-existing Islamist groups fighting in domestic conflict, in Jammu-Kashmir for example, and harder to reach. Among the low number of radicalized individuals as well as arrestees, not much evidence suggest a preference for particular external groups. Radicalized individuals are likely to join military ranks of domestic groups.
- **The current situation in India appears permissible for ISIS**, given the gradual development of India as a support-base since 2014, and especially Bangladesh and the north-eastern states of India combined with the highly unstable situation in the border-

region of Myanmar and Bangladesh, provides a likely entry point for ISIS to India, as it can utilize existing networks while facing limited resistance from governments. However, considering the general shift from territorial caliphate to online-caliphate, the activities of ISIS is currently concentrated in Bangladesh and the Afghan-Pak region. The territorial setback along with Indian returnees may impact on the perception ISIS' perceived strength and its popularity.

- **Cooperation between the Maoist and ISIS is less likely**, as it would be disadvantageous to the former, and would run contrary to both principles and ideology. ISIS- Maoist cooperation in the north-eastern states is however more likely, due to the various insurgent groups. Should an ISIS- Maoist alliance materialize, it could be indicative of a weakened Maoist insurgency, and it would likely alter the threat posed to India insofar ISIS could utilize the red corridor to further its agenda.

6. Appendix

5.1 Combat indicators timeline

May, 2014

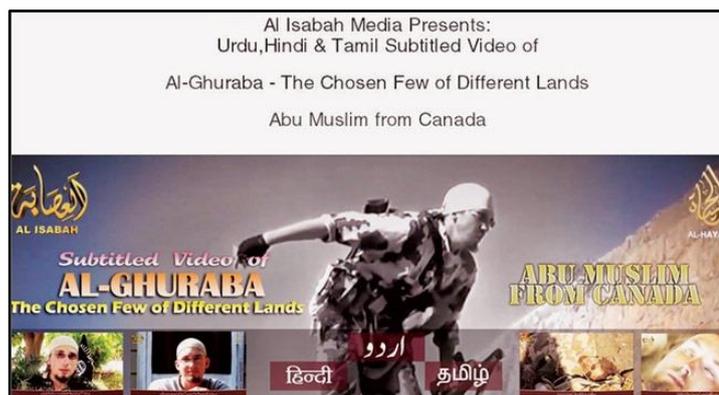
- Four men from Kaylan, Maharashtra, were identified as having been radicalized online and later joined ISIS in Iraq. A Kaylan-based engineer, Arif Majeed, was caught upon returning to India. Two others were reported killed, and one is presumably still fighting.

June, 2014

- June 19th, ISIS announced itself as a caliphate and unilaterally declares statehood and demands recognition from other Islamist groups. Several maps from different sources emerges which includes parts of western India. Headline news stories feature a video showing a map of ISIS' caliphate.
- ISIS kidnaps 40 Indian workers in Mosul, Iraq. 39 are executed.

July, 2014

- Four young men in their mid-twenties from Mumbai (Maharashtra state) were identified by security forces to be fighting for ISIS in Iraq.
- A youth from Tamil Nadu was identified to have joined ISIS in Syria.
- Initial assessment from security forces indicated that between 18 and 80 Indian nationals have joined ISIS in Syria and Iraq. Most of them were from the states of Maharashtra, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- Masked men were seen waving flags of ISIS in Srinagar (Jammu and Kashmir).
- A member of Ansar-ut Tawhid fi Bilad al-Hind (AuT – Supporters of Monotheism in the Land of India), the Indian terrorist group which eventually pledged support to ISIS, was killed in Afghanistan.
- 46 Indian nurses kidnapped by ISIS in Iraq.



August, 2014

- Al Isabah Media Production, which claims to be the media unit of AUT, posted ISIS propaganda videos on the internet with Tamil, Hindu and Urdu subtitles.
- One Indian youth from Mumbai who joined ISIS was killed in a bomb blast outside Mosul in Iraq.
- Two young men were arrested in Ramanathpuram (Tamil Nadu) after a photograph of a group of people posing in T-shirts with the ISIS emblem went viral on social media.



September, 2014

- Four engineering students from Hyderabad (Telangana) were arrested in Kolkata (West Bengal) when they were trying to travel to Bangladesh to meet an ISIS recruiter and later proceed to Iraq.
- Media reports indicated that the first ISIS suicide attack by an Indian was carried out by a youth from Tamil Nadu in Iraq.
- Two Indian origin recruiters of ISIS were using internet to recruit youths from Jaipur (Rajasthan), Hyderabad (Telangana) and other places in India. One of the recruiters was based in the Af-Pak region and was connected to AUT and its predecessor Indian Mujahideen (IM), while the other one was carrying out recruitment from the Gulf region.

October, 2014

- An ISIS sympathiser was arrested in Mumbai for conspiring to blow up US establishments in the city including a school. The suspect, who worked for a multinational software company, was radicalised through the internet.

November, 2014

- Intelligence agencies found out that local terror groups like AUT and Students Islamic

Movement of India (SIMI) were invoking the name of ISIS to recruit Indian Muslims. These groups were taking Indian recruits to Af-Pak border region and after training, the plan was to send them back to India to spread terror.

- Security agencies identified calls being made from Kolkata to an ISIS operative in a West Asian country. The calls were made to discuss the ramification of the blast in Burdwan (West Bengal), where two Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) terrorists were killed while trying to make IEDs. The ISIS operative expressed displeasure at the JMB module blowing its cover in the state.

December, 2014

- Indian police arrested an ISIS sympathiser Mehdi Masroor Biswas, from Bangalore (Karnataka), for spreading ISIS propaganda via an influential ISIS Twitter account, @ShamiWitness, social media and providing information for would be ISIS recruits.
- Indian government banned ISIS and also blocked 32 websites which were being used by ISIS to spread its ideology in India and recruit Indian youths.

January, 2015

- Britain warned India about possible terror strikes by ISIS in India, several Indian cities put on high alert.

February, 2015

- Intelligence agencies identified at least 35 ISIS recruiters present inside India who were actively recruiting Indian Muslims from Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bangalore and Hyderabad. Reports indicated that the campaign was being carried out through word of mouth and not through the internet.

March, 2015

- Four Indian nationals fighting for ISIS were killed in Iraq and Syria. One of them was identified to be a major ISIS recruiter in India and was from Bhatkal (Karnataka).

May, 2015

- The National Investigation Agency (NIA), India's premier counter-terrorism unit, admitted for the first time that ISIS had plans for India and that four ISIS recruits from Mumbai

had plans to attack India. Additionally, NIA also informed that ISIS have developed links with anti-India terror groups.

- 14 engineering students were detained at Hyderabad airport who were on their way to join ISIS in Syria and Iraq.
- A 27-year old Indian engineer from Hyderabad was killed while fighting for ISIS in Syria.
- First known dedicated module of ISIS was identified in Ratlam (Madhya Pradesh) after the arrest of five ISIS terrorists. The Ratlam module was being run by a person called Irfan Khan, who was reporting to Shafi Armar, who is an AUT operative and chief of ISIS recruitment in India. The Ratlam module wanted to instigate communal tension in the area by carrying out terrorist attacks and then wanted to use the communal tension to recruit more members for ISIS.

June, 2015

- Intelligence Bureau (IB) sounded an alert on possible terror strikes by ISIS across the country. This was the first time such an alert was issued specifically for ISIS.

July, 2015

- A senior Indian army official informed that ISIS is trying to gain foothold in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) and that it was a big threat for the Kashmir valley and India in general.
- AUT and former IM operative Baba Sajid died while fighting for ISIS in Kobani, Syria. He was originally from Azamgarh (Uttar Pradesh).
- Reports indicated that three youths from Azamgarh had joined ISIS in Syria, before doing a stint in Afghanistan in 2013. All of them were recruited by AUT.
- Union Home Ministry in collaboration with ten states believed to be most vulnerable to ISIS activities formulated a national coherent strategy to deal with ISIS. The steps discussed were involvement of community elders, monitoring of social media platforms, real-time sharing of information etc.

August, 2015

- Latest government estimates indicated that 17 Indian national have joined ISIS in Iraq

and Syria, six of whom have already died.

- A journalist from Kerala joined ISIS in Syria.
- Two youths from Gujarat reportedly joined ISIS in Syria.
- Central government alerted Kerala that a module of IM / AUT having links with ISIS was planning to recruit Muslims from the state for sending to Iraq and Syria.

September, 2015

- The first female Indian member of ISIS was arrested in Hyderabad after she was deported from UAE. The suspect was working as a recruiter for ISIS in India. The ISIS recruiter had built up a vast databank of 25,000 Indian Muslim youth, whom she reached out through social media and provoked them to join ISIS. She also had succeeded in motivating about a dozen youths from India to join ISIS. During interrogation she also revealed the identities of nine ISIS members active in India as well as the names of a few ISIS recruitment organisations working in India.
- Security agencies came to know about ISIS using WhatsApp to recruit youths from Kerala. Additionally, youths from Kerala were also lured with high paying jobs and money to visit Syria.
- Assam was identified as the state with the second highest internet traffic related to ISIS in India. The hits indicated that the users from Assam were not just browsing ISIS online materials out of curiosity, but for something more. The first state in this category was Jammu and Kashmir.
- Four youths from Kerala were detained at Kozhikode and Thiruvananthapuram airports after they were deported from UAE for planning to join ISIS.
- Central intelligence agencies warned that ISIS was planning to carry out attacks in Delhi and Rajasthan. It was also mentioned that the ISIS terrorists could either carry out lone-wolf attacks or could attack in a group of two or three fighters.

October, 2015

- An ISIS militant who returned to India was found to have planned to carry out a suicide attack at the Mumbai police headquarters.

November, 2015

- Intelligence reports indicated that nearly 150 Indians, mostly from South India, were under surveillance for their leanings towards ISIS and sympathy towards the group's activities. Most of these suspects were in contact with some ISIS activists through internet.
- A former SIMI from Bhatkal (Karnataka) was arrested in UAE for planning to join ISIS.
- Two youth from Chennai (Tamil Nadu) were arrested and later put under surveillance after they were deported from Turkey for attempting to get in touch with ISIS.
- Intelligence reports indicated that ISIS HQ had set a target of recruiting 300 to AIT by end of 2016. Also, ISIS wanted Indian recruits to be deployed to Afghanistan rather than Syria or Iraq.

December, 2015

- ISIS released a manifesto in which it threatened to start a war against India and explained the problems faced by Muslims in India under the Narendra Modi government.
- Three students from Hyderabad were arrested at Nagpur airport (Maharashtra) while they were on their way to join ISIS in Afghanistan.
- Police arrested a 16-year old girl from Pune (Maharashtra) for planning to join ISIS in Syria.
- Three youths from Mumbai left country to join ISIS in Syria.
- Latest government report indicated that 23 Indians had joined ISIS in Syria / Iraq, while six had already died and two had returned back to India. Four belonged to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, four were from Kerala, three from Tamil Nadu, four from Maharashtra, one from Jammu and Kashmir and one from Uttar Pradesh.
- A youth from Chennai was arrested after he was deported from Sudan for trying to join ISIS in Libya.
- Government reports indicated that the security agencies had managed to stop 60 Indians from joining ISIS.
- At least 40 youths from Kerala aged 16 – 22 were being monitored by security agencies

for taking interest in ISIS. These youths hail from the districts of Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Chikkamagaluru, Hubballi-Dharwad, Belgavi and Kalburgi.

January, 2016

- NIA arrested 13 ISIS sympathisers during simultaneous raids in six cities across the nation – Bangalore, Tumkur, Mangalore, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Lucknow. The suspects were planning to carry out attacks ahead of the Republic Day celebrations. Huge cache of explosives, timers and other materials were recovered. One of the militants arrested during the raid was identified as Muddabir Mushtaq Sheikh, the chief of AUT or ISIS chapter in India. The deputy chief of AUT was also arrested during the raids. The militants wanted to topple the government and bring in Sharia law in the country through terror activities.
- Mahatma Gandhi's statue was defaced in Jaipur and "ISIS long live" was scribbled on the back of the statue.
- Investigations revealed that Indian recruits of ISIS were being given online training to make bombs by the group's foreign handlers. Also, ISIS HQ had instructed its Indian recruits to scout for targets in Delhi and Mumbai.
- ISIS was luring Indian hackers with upto US\$ 10000 per job to hack into government websites and steal sensitive data.
- ISIS activities continue to spread in India as the government adds 5 more states to the previous list of 13 states and union territories jointly dealing with the problem.
- Reports indicated that more than 30,000 people in India are in contact with ISIS and ready to wage war against the country.
- Four Indian youth arrested in Syria while trying to join ISIS.
- A human trafficking racket busted in Delhi revealed that fake Indian passports were being used to traffic hundreds of Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar to reach ISIS held territories via Saudi Arabia.
- Four ISIS suspects were arrested from Manglour (Uttarakhand) and were planning to carry out attacks during the Ardh Kumbh religious event in the state.

February, 2016

- A key ISIS operative was arrested from Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh). He was instrumental in setting up ISIS' terror network in Uttar Pradesh and was believed to be the group's primary recruiter in India.
- Mohammad Azhar, a native of Bhopal and part of a nationwide ISIS-inspired module, was arrested by the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), suspected of being part of Junood-al-Khalifa-e-Hind, set up by Syria-based Shafi Ammar, who has pledged allegiance to Abu-Bakr-al-Baghdadi of ISIS. Upon investigation, Azhar revealed he had attempted twice to establish contact to Maoist insurgents in Chhattisgarh in 2015, but failed. According to NIA investigations, Maoist strategies had been inspirational to Azhar.
- One suspected ISIS member was arrested in Delhi and was believed to be funding another terrorist cell in Uttarakhand.
- A suspected ISIS militant was arrested from Durgapur in West Bengal.
- An ISIS sympathiser was arrested in Goa for planning to carry out an attack in the tourist destination.
- A body representing Sufi-Sunni Muslims, All India Tanzeem Ulema-E-Islam (AITUI), claimed that ISIS is active in the country under different names and sought a ban on fronts representing such groups to prevent threats to national security.

March, 2016

- A 19-year old boy from Hoogly (West Bengal) was arrested for links to ISIS and facilitating recruitment for the group.
- Interrogation of arrested militants revealed that Goa tops the list of ISIS planned targets in India. The group wanted to attack foreign tourists in the state for global publicity.

April, 2016

- The Emir of ISIS in Bangladesh, Abu Ibrahim al-Hanif mentioned in an interview in ISIS' monthly magazine about the group's plans to attack India with the help of local terror groups from Bangladesh and Pakistan.
- Shafi Ammar, the head and principal recruiter of ISIS in India was killed in an airstrike in Syria. He was originally from Bhatkal in Karnataka.

- An ISIS recruit was arrested at Pune airport as he was about to board a flight to Dubai to meet ISIS handlers. He was a resident of Bhatkal in Karnataka and a lookout circular was issued for him so that he could not leave the country.
- ISIS handlers based in Syria instructed the group's recruiters and members in India to lie low for some time in the wake of the NIA's nationwide crackdown on the group's network.
- Wednesday 26th, speaking to the Rajya Sabha Minister of state for home affairs Haribhai Parathibhai Chaudhary replied in the negative when asked "if it is a fact that a nexus between Islamic State and various Naxalite groups of the country has come to notice, as supporters in country have been caught trying to carry out a big attack in the country by taking training and weapons from the Naxalites."

May, 2016

- ISIS releases video with Indians fighters who call for people to join ISIS and the growing caliphate.
- Reports indicated that ISIS supporters in India were asked to infiltrate the students protest at Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University early in 2016 and spread chaos.
- Latest government figures indicated that Indian security agencies had arrested 50 ISIS recruits in India during the previous eight months. These people were either on their way to join ISIS in Syria or were recruiting for the group inside India.
- Indian intelligence sources mentioned that ISIS had replaced Pakistan based terror groups as the new choice of radicalised Indian Muslims.
- Five women among 25 handlers have been assigned with the task of recruiting and spreading the network of ISIS in India. All these handlers were based outside India – mostly in Philippines, Kenya, Argentina, Sri Lanka and Indonesia.
- Indian intelligence and security agencies were tracking 500 Indian Muslim youth for their attraction and support towards ISIS. Most of them are from the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Delhi.
- Thursday 19th, ISIS fighters mock Muslims who live in harmony with Hindus, and urge them to join the militant group's caliphate. An identified fighter, Abu Salman al-Hindi said

“in this you get to have hatred for the *kuffar*, in this land you get to perform *jihad*...in this land, your religion is safe. In this land, Allah’s law is the highest. In this land, you have nothing that stops you from doing good deeds, from doing *da’wah*’, from preaching Islam. In this land your life, your honour, your property is protected.” Another fighter proclaims ISIS will go to India to avenge the death of Muslims killed in the Gujarat riots in 2002, when Modi was serving as Gujarat’s Chief Minister. Other events cited by ISIS was the 1992 destruction of the Babrij Masjid mosque by Hindu extremists (sevaks) in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh and also reclaiming Kashmir, as well as waging war against the Indian government.

June, 2016

- National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and Indian police arrested 11 members of an ISIS module from Hyderabad who were at the advanced stage of carrying out an attack in the city. Explosives, arms and other bomb making materials were also recovered from them. **This was the first incident involving a confirmed ISIS plan to attack an Indian target.**
- A suspected terrorist was arrested at Burdwan station in West Bengal. **Interrogations later revealed that he had links to both ISIS and JMB.**
- 16 people had gone missing from northern Kerala recently and police believe they had joined ISIS in Syria.

July, 2016

- Intelligence agencies reported that ISIS had switched its strategy for India. Previously they wanted Indian Muslims to travel to Syria or Iraq. But recently the group has shown more interest in setting up ISIS modules and using these modules to carry out attacks inside India. Intelligence agencies described that ISIS is essentially working on a franchise model, where the local recruits are guided by AUT members based in Syria.
- The chief of ISIS Hyderabad module was arrested from Hyderabad.
- Two ISIS recruiters were arrested in Mumbai. Both of them were originally from Kerala.
- An ISIS recruiter was arrested from Parbhani (Maharashtra). The suspect was in contact with a Syria based handler and was using social media to recruit people for the group.
- NIA mentioned that the India chapter of ISIS had been in contact with the Naxalite

insurgents to learn their MO and also purchase weapons from them. Two ISIS recruits also met Naxalites in Jharkhand state to discuss the collaboration.

August 2016

- An Afghan woman arrested in Delhi airport revealed that 40 people from Kerala and Karnataka were indoctrinated by an ISIS recruiter from Kerala, who had since moved to Afghanistan. Out of these 40 suspects, 21 had already disappeared and are believed to have gone to Afghanistan. Following the revelation, police began surveillance on the remaining 19.
- A Kuwaiti national was arrested by the authorities in Kuwait for financing the travel of first batch of ISIS recruits from India to Syria three years back. The arrest was made based on the information provided by Indian agencies.

October, 2016

- NIA arrested an ISIS recruit from Koci (Kerala) for collecting money and explosives for the group in India. The suspect had previously joined ISIS in Syria but later returned to India after allegedly finding the violence unbearable. He later returned to India and the Indian authorities did not press any charges against him at that time and allowed to return him to normal life.
- Police arrested six ISIS terrorists from a hilltop shrine in Kanakmala (Kerala). The suspects were collecting explosives and other materials to mount attacks in southern states during the Hindu festival Diwali.
- NIA arrested three youths from Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) for having suspected links with ISIS.

November, 2016

- US Embassy issued a terror alert advising its citizens to India to maintain high level of vigilance citing reports indicating that ISIS might carry out attack against Westerners in India.
- Home Ministry informed the parliament that 68 supporters of ISIS have been arrested in India thus far, out of which 50 were arrested in 2016. Out of them 11 belonged to Maharashtra, 11 belonged to Telangana, 7 belonged to Karnataka, 4 from Uttarakhand, 6 from Kerala, 1 from Delhi, 2 from West Bengal, 1 from Rajasthan, 2 from Uttar

Pradesh, 1 from Madhya Pradesh, 1 from Jammu and Kashmir, 1 from Bihar and 2 from Tamil Nadu.

- An ISIS financier and recruiter was arrested from Sikar (Rajasthan). The suspect had been working for a company in UAE and had returned to India recently.

December, 2016

- An ISIS suspect from Bangalore was arrested in Kullu (Himachal Pradesh). The suspect was living at a church with a fake identity for the previous few months.
- Two Indian engineers were deported from Turkey for planning to join ISIS in Syria.
- Kurdish YPG killed Aman Tandel, one of the four Indian youths from Mumbai who joined ISIS in Syria in 2014.

January, 2017

- A Kerala youth detained for being part of an ISIS terrorist conspiracy in India at the Indira Gandhi International airport in Delhi.
- Posters of ISIS surfaced near an army cantonment in Himachal Pradesh's Solan district. One of the posters warned of triggering three bomb blasts from Subathu to Nepal.
- 3rd January, ISIS releases 19min long video containing images of Turkish President Ergodan and Indian PM Modi, targeting both India based on its collaboration with Turkey and working against the interests of Muslims.

February, 2017

- Two youths were arrested from Saurashtra region (Gujarat) for having alleged links with ISIS. The arrested duo were planning carried out an attack on Chotila temple in Surendranagar district, which was foiled by security agency.

March, 2017

- Middle-eastern terror outfit ISIS released a graphic depicting Taj Mahal as a possible target on 14 March. The graffiti was posted by the Ahwaal Ummat Media Center on a channel of Telegram, the encrypted communication app.
- Assam Rifles (AR) arrested two ISIS suspects from Tamil Nadu at a border check post

at Khudengthabi along the Trans Asian Highway No 1 in Chandel District (Manipur)

- An online radicalized module related to ISIS, carried out a low-intensity blast with a pipe-bomb in a train in Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh which injured at least 10 passengers.
- Two crude bombs exploded on Saturday - one near the Agra Cantonment Railway station and another on the rooftop of a nearby house in Agra, the popular tourist city.
- An ISIS operative holed up in a house in Lucknow, the capital of northern Uttar Pradesh state was killed in a police anti-militancy operation. The slain militant was part of an ISIS-linked group" which planned a train blast in central Madhya Pradesh state
- The Police teams of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh on 20 April conducted multi-state joint operation and arrested four suspected ISIS terrorists of Khorasan module
- An alleged ISIS sympathiser and recruiter was arrested on being suspicion that to be associated with ISIS from the capital after he was deported from Saudi Arabia

April, 2017

- Three ISIS-cell suspected of actively recruitment was detained in Mumbra, along with two others in joint operation of Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terror Squad (ATS) and Delhi Police Special Cell.

May, 2017

- A resident of Kasargod (Kerala) exposed Pro-ISIS messages being circulated via WhatsApp messaging services hailing the terror group.

July, 2017

- A suspected ISIS sympathizer was arrested from Indira Gandhi International airport in Delhi after he was deported by Turkey police.
- A suspected ISIS handler was detained from Burma Bazaar area in Chennai in Tamil Nadu. The accused is suspected of collecting and sending funds to the terrorist organisation.
- 8th July, PM Modi equates Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), to IS and Al-Qaeda, saying their ideology is the same, at the G20

meeting in Hamburg, Germany. He also proposed an 11 point agenda targeting terrorism in South Asia. It included suggestions for exchange of lists of terrorists among G20 nations, easing and expediting of legal processes like extradition and concrete steps to choke funds and weapon supply to the terrorists.

August, 2017

- Two youths were arrested from Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) for allegedly having links with terror group ISIS

September, 2017

- An ISIS supporter was detained from Tamil Nadu while he was planned to travel to Syria to join the terror outfit as well as carry out attacks in Tami Nadu.



- Three men with suspected links to ISIS have been arrested by the Indian authorities in Hyderabad. They were believed to be planning terror attacks in the Uttar Pradesh area. Among the arrestees one was accused of collecting and transporting explosive materials.

October, 2017

- Two suspected militants of ISIS were arrested from Surat district in Gujarat. They were planning to carry out attack during the upcoming Gujarat assembly election and both were in touch with ISIS through social media.
- Two youths were arrested suspected of having links with ISIS from Kannur district (Kerala)
- Wednesday 25th three Indian ISIS suspects were arrested upon returning to India from Turkey. Abdul Razk, Midilaj and MV Rashid, were all residents of Kerala.

November, 2017

- One suspected ISIS militant was detained from the Mumbai Airport in Maharashtra state. The suspect was residing in Riyadh and formed a social media group in highly-secure chat application Threema to allegedly radicalise youths and lure them to ISIS.

- At least six more youths from Kannur district (Kerala) have joined middle -eastern terror outfit ISIS in Syria. These youths were active workers of the Popular Front of India (PFI) in Kerala. Among them one was close associate of an ISIS operative who was arrested in Delhi few months ago.

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