ISIS in India

What is the issue?

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- Two suspected Islamic State associates were arrested recently from Gujarat.
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- Also one of the 21 persons who went missing from Kerala last year and were believed to have joined the IS, was reported to have been killed in a drone strike in Afghanistan.
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- Anti-terror officials have recently arrested young people from different parts of the country — in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, West Bengal and Rajasthan.
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- These incidents once again raises the question whether IS is finding support in India.
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How prevalent is IS in India?

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- The number of Indians to have joined the ranks of the IS is very small.
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- In 2015, the number of Indians who have joined the IS was 23, compared to 760 from the U.K. and 150 from the U.S.
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- As Indian Islam is syncretic in nature, it is extremely difficult for groups such as the IS to become popular among Muslims, as it did in parts of Iraq and Syria.
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- But lone- wolf attacks inspired by the IS world view could pose security risks.
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What is the IS' MO?

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- Ever since the organisation declared a ‘Caliphate’ in 2014, it has attracted thousands of fighters from around the world.
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- The IS thrives on support from young foreign jihadists.
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- It used two tactics viz urging sympathisers either to travel to Iraq or Syria to join the war, or carry out terror attacks in their own countries after declaring allegiance to the ‘Caliph’.
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- The IS is not recruiting people through local communities as in the case of other terror organisations.
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- Nor they are recruiting through madrasas as in Pakistan and Afghanistan.
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- The IS It reaches out through online propaganda.
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- Currently, as the IS is under attack in its core territories and is desperate to expand its reach beyond West Asia.
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- Therefore it has carried out major terrorist attacks in India’s neighbourhood — in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, including the bombing at the Sehwan Sufi shrine.
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What India should do to prevent it?

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- It is important to not let these isolated arrests be blown out of proportion to target the larger Muslim population, which right-wing elements often try to do.
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- At the same time, India should continue its high-level intelligence and counter-terror operations.
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- The state and Muslim religious leaders should co-ordinate in countering radicalisation and having in place specific de-radicalisation programmes.
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Source: The Hindu

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