

Zero Tolerance for Terror Sympathisers

In any democratic nation, the fight against terrorism is not limited to countering armed militants alone; it equally involves identifying and dismantling the ecosystem that enables extremist ideology to thrive. While terrorists execute violent acts, their sympathisers—those who justify, encourage, finance, shelter, or propagate extremist narratives—form the invisible yet critical support structure that sustains terrorism. A firm policy of zero tolerance for terror sympathisers is, therefore, not only necessary but essential for national security and social harmony.

Terror sympathisers often operate in subtle ways. They may not be directly involved in violent acts, but they contribute by spreading radical propaganda, glorifying terrorism on social media, influencing vulnerable youth, or providing logistical or financial support. Such individuals act as force multipliers for extremist groups. The danger they pose is significant because they legitimise violence, distort public opinion, and create confusion among communities by projecting terrorists as victims or martyrs. Nations across the world have witnessed how this indirect support feeds radicalisation, eventually escalating into full-blown violence.

A strong and uncompromising stance against terror sympathisers is thus vital. This includes enforcing strict legal action under anti-terror laws, tracking digital radicalisation, monitoring financial channels, and dismantling networks that facilitate extremist ideology. Equally important is preventing misuse of free speech. Freedom of expression cannot and should not be mistaken for freedom to support terror activities or glorify those who threaten national peace. Democracies must draw a clear line between dissent and the endorsement of violence.

Educational institutions, religious organisations, and social groups must work collectively to ensure that young minds are protected from extremist narratives.

Terrorism remains one of the greatest threats to peace, development, and national unity. A nation can win this battle only when it refuses to tolerate not just the perpetrators of violence but also those who provide ideological or emotional support to them. A zero-tolerance policy towards terror sympathisers is, therefore, indispensable for safeguarding the future and ensuring lasting peace for generations to come.

Earthworms: Soil and Ecosystem Engineers

■ DR. BANARSI LAL

Earthworms are also known as farmer's friends, intestines of the earth, ploughmen of the field, biological indicators and ecological engineers. They are commonly found in the soil and act as the soil conditioners. They are hermaphrodites and develop slowly except leaf litter dwellers. They have the capability to maintain the soil fertility and thus play a crucial role in sustainability in agriculture. They are considered as one of the most important soil animals. They play an important role in the management of biodiversity and ecosystem. Importance of earthworm in the ecosystem was documented very early by Aristotle, the Greek philosopher who called them "intestines of the earth" and then in 1881 Charles Darwin highlighted their role in breakdown of dead plant as well as animal matter. They can live for 2-8 years and can produce 8-12 cocoons per year. Worldwide there are about 3000 species of earthworms. Generally the species of earthworms used for preparation of vermicompost are Eisenia fetida and Eudrilus eugeniae. Along with the earthworms, bacteria, fungi and actinomycetes also participate in decomposition. During hot summers they move to deeper layers and activate. They bring the nutrients from the deeper layers of soil and deposit them on the surface of the soil surface as the castings. Plant growth regulator like Auxin is produced in the castings of earthworm that stimulates the roots to grow more rapidly and much deeper. Nitrogen casting is higher in worm casts due to the occurrence of nitrogen-fixing bacteria in the earthworm gut as well as in worm casts. Earthworms normally require sufficient moisture for the appropriate growth and development. 75-90 per cent of body weight of earthworms is constituted

with the water. The increase of temperature above the critical point may be fatal for the earthworms. The country now has enough food grains but there is need to stress on the quality of the food for the mankind. Vermicomposting is the technology that synergizes microbial degradation with earthworm's activity for reducing, reusing and recycling waste materials in a shorter span of time. Mutual action of earthworms and microbes brings faster decomposition as earthworms aerate condition, fragment and enhance surface area of the organic matter for microbial action. Vermicomposting is a very simple technology practiced by the farmer himself and some farmers make it as an enterprise. Vermicompost plays an important role in organic farming and can be made easily by using the locally available material at farmers' field. Earthworms promote the growth and propagation of beneficial organisms in the soil.

Sustainable agriculture means the production of food from plants or animals using different agricultural techniques that protect the environment, society and animals. Although the excessive use of agro-chemicals increases the crop yields but it deteriorates the soil, environment and human health. The new agricultural practices have caused a fall in the biodiversity and disturbed the ecosystems. The product obtained by the modulation of organic waste in the earthworm gut is quite different from its parent waste material and is also known as black gold or vermicast. Climate change, land use pattern and nitrogen enrichment have also been reported to cause a change in soil biodiversity. Indian earthworms are dominant by indigenous species that contribute approximately 89% of total earthworm diversity and are represented by nine families, 67-69 genera, and 418-

509 species. Out of them about 51 are exotic species. Earthworms play a crucial role in sustainable agriculture. With green revolution there was boost in agricultural production but it caused some adverse affect on the soil, environment and human health. Green revolution has resulted in boosting the production due to intensive agriculture. There was excessive use of chemical fertilizers and irrigation. In order to develop the healthy environment, soil and human health natural farming or organic farming is need of the hour. It is economically productive and simple with more profits and long lasting.

Earthworm burrows act as a channel for as pathways for plants root elongation, plant growth and especially in compacted zones typically found in deeper soil layers. Earthworms make the soil porous, increase the water infiltration rate and reducing soil erosion. It has been observed in some studies that earthworms release certain metabolites such as vitamin B and vitamin D into the soil which are good for the growth of plants. It has also been reported that earthworms can convert barren land into fertile land and increase agriculture output. Vermicompost and Vermiwash produced from various organic materials play an important role in eco-friendly farming, nutrient availability, pests' protection and soil fertility improvement. The vermicast acts as buffer; it has a significantly lower volatile solid content and high nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. With the use of vermiculture, cost of cultivation is reduced and quality of food is increased. The organic food is more costlier than the conventional food and thus one can generate more money by growing the organic food. It is a 'win-win' situation for both producers and the consumers. The cost of production of Vermicompost is less-

er than the chemical fertilizers. The former is produced from 'animal waste'-a raw material which is available easily at farmers' field and the latter is obtained from 'petroleum products' which is a vanishing resource on the Earth. Vermicompost can be produced easily with the simple method while the chemical fertilizers are high-tech and high-cost products manufactured in factories. Vermicompost shortens the harvesting time and farmers can grow more crops every year. Earthworms are considered as the 'nature's gift' in farm production. There is need to adopt the agricultural production system which should have high productivity and stability in yield. It should consume minimum water and can sustain even in dry spells. It should preserve water, air, soil quality and crop diversity. It should be a source of good health for all. It should save the energy. Earthworms maintain aerobic condition of soil. It also degrades the contaminants in the soil. Vermicomposting technology promotes agricultural sustainability. Earthworms facilitate the microbial and biochemical soil activity on the substrate. They also reduce the environmental risk. Earthworms and their vermicast work as a driving force in sustainable food production as they improve soil fertility, improve nutrition quality in food crops, protect crops from various diseases and pests and diseases and increase plants growth parameters. They are the cheapest source for the production of quality food for the mankind. There is need to utilize the earthworms for the management of agro-ecosystem.

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Decisive action against terrorism is necessary

■ DR. PRIYANKA SAURABH

India is going through a phase where the nature of terrorism has changed, becoming more complex and dangerous. Recent incidents, from the capital Delhi to various cities across the country, are not just acts of violence, but a reminder that our security structures still lack the strength and preparedness they should have. Each explosion is not merely an accident, but also a question: as an emerging global power, is India viewing its internal security with the same seriousness as the developed nations of the world? After the horrors of 9/11, the United States perceived terrorism as a threat that transformed its entire security system, law and order, and political outlook. India now requires the same level of sensitivity and decisiveness.

It must be acknowledged that terrorism has now transcended old boundaries and entered a new technological world. While it once involved guns, training camps, and cross-border guerrilla networks, it now operates through social media, the dark web, encrypted chats, cryptocurrencies, and fake identities. Today, a single individual, known as a "lone wolf," can receive instructions from any organization anywhere in the world and carry out an incident within minutes. The process of crowd radicalization has become so rapid and profound that a single video, a post, or a fiery speech can push many young people astray. In such a situation, to consider terrorism solely a threat from across borders is tantamount to blinding reality.

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Incidents like the one at Nehru Place in Delhi have once again highlighted that while the technology of terrorism may be evolving, our shortcomings remain the same. Surveillance cameras are limited in number, their quality is inadequate, and many of them malfunction. AI-based surveillance systems are still not implemented in many critical areas. It's also a harsh truth that the complexity of incidents has increased exponentially compared to the capabilities of investigative agencies. In a modern world where a tiny device can hold countless digital evidence, the number and sophistication of our forensic labs remain limited. The question is: how long will we continue to face a changing world with these same old weaknesses?

A modern capital should have a 24x7 intelligent surveillance system, where every crowded area, every market, every public station, and every sensitive institution is under the surveillance of AI-enabled cameras. The US, UK, France, and Israel have ensured years ago that no dark corner is left for terrorists. India must also prioritize surveillance now. Strengthening law and order will come not just from increasing police numbers, but from technology, data, and fast-functioning networks.

It is also a serious matter that our judicial process in terrorism cases is not as swift as it should be. Years-long trials, witnesses turning hostile, weak prosecutions, and the complexity of digital evidence—all of these directly

and indirectly benefit terrorists. While the United States made it clear after 9/11 that neither delay nor laxity is acceptable in terrorism cases, India should also send the message that justice in terrorism cases must be swift and firm. This is not just a legal requirement, but a national security imperative.

The role of civic awareness is as important as that of agencies in preventing terrorism. A small piece of information from an ordinary citizen can prevent many major attacks. But people often hesitate to contact the police, finding the process lengthy and complicated, or thinking, "It's not my job." This mindset must change. The government must create a system where citizens can easily report information, and a prompt response mechanism is in place. Vigilance should be strengthened down to the neighborhood level. When citizens become aware, the space for terrorism automatically shrinks.

Unfortunately, security policy in India often becomes entangled in political debates. The opposition attributes an incident to the ruling party's failure, while the ruling party attempts to shirk responsibility by simply labeling it a "terrorist conspiracy." But terrorism has no political overtones. It is neither a friend nor an enemy of any ideology; it only harms the nation and its citizens. Therefore, it is imperative that national security be placed above politics. In the United States, both parties remain united on national security issues; this cul-

ture must develop in India as well.

Technology is the new security wall of this era. India must build a comprehensive technology-based security model in the next few years. AI-based CCTV networks, facial recognition systems, real-time data interlinking, modern digital forensic labs, deployment of cyber experts, special task forces to monitor suspicious financial transactions and the dark web—all these steps are absolutely essential. We must understand that terrorism can be defeated not only with guns and bombs, but also with data and technology.

Terrorism not only causes human loss of life, but it also deeply wounds a country's economy. Every explosion deters investment, weakens tourism, and directly impacts trade. An insecure capital could harm India's role in the global economy. Therefore, security is a question not only of civilian life but also of India's economic future.

India is now at a decisive turning point.

The time has come to formulate a clear, robust, and modern counterterrorism policy—one that combines the power of law, the precision of technology, the awareness of citizens, and the will of the government. The example set by the United States after 9/11 demonstrates that decisive action can transform outcomes. India must demonstrate this same rigor. National security is not a matter for compromise. It is a responsibility that allows no delay.

Embracing Authenticity: A Sophisticated Spotlight on Transgender Lives

■ DR LUCKY GUPTA

Last week was observed as Transgender Awareness Week. The significant importance of this week was to advocate transgender equality and safety at the global level by addressing their issues on several platforms. During this period, the community's spotlight is on transgender lives, and it culminates in the Transgender Day of Remembrance.

The period acts as a bridge between silence and voice, between visibility and invisibility, and between remembrance and action. This week reminds us to learn, to speak, and to act. During this time, the resilience and positive impact of transgender persons, along with awareness among the public, organisations, and allies about the challenges they face in their lives, are focussed on.

The significance of the week deliberates and addresses many issues related to transgender persons, including increasing consciousness about transgender people who continue to face discrimination in many areas of life such as healthcare, employment, education, and misinformation.

It helps society understand their reality of identification, acceptance, and transformation.

Families and individuals often share their personal stories throughout this week through community events and media, debunking preconceptions and promoting genuine understanding about transgender identities.

These are done through various workshops, lectures, and campaigns. Honouring the lives lost in violent

crimes against transgender individuals and drawing attention to the urgent need for change are two major purposes of memorials and vigils.

Clinical Protocol to follow are the WHO Guidelines for 2023-2025, which are as follows:

- ▶ Gender-affirming care
- ▶ Mental health integration
- ▶ Sexual and reproductive health services
- ▶ Community engagement
- ▶ Incorporation of Indian and regional perspectives, including culturally sensitive approaches

Despite its origin in the USA, Transgender Awareness Week is now celebrated all over the globe. Art exhibits and panel discussions are just two of the many ways that grassroots organisations, advocacy groups, and colleges throughout the world commemorate the week.

Awareness must lead to action because it is a call to conscience.

"Equality is not charity, it is justice," the statement goes on to say, pushing people to rise above feelings of kindness and assume personal accountability to advocate for more inclusive policies and practices.

Mental health services should recognise and support the journey of every transgender individual so that all communities can thrive and every individual, regardless of their gender identity, can experience a sense of belonging, safety, and liberation.

(Dr Lucky Gupta, Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatric Surgery)

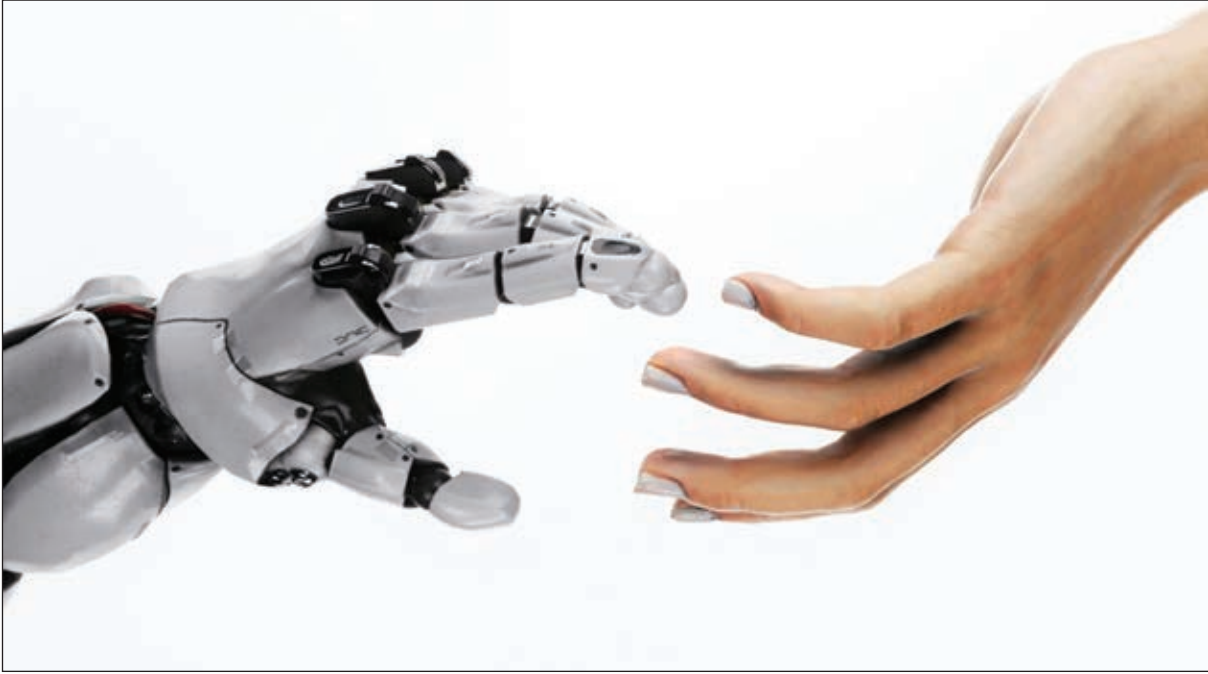
Artificial Intelligence in the job market

■ DR. VIJAY GARG

According to NITI Aayog's report Roadmap for Job Creation in the Artificial intelligence (AI) Economy 2025, while the increasing influence of AI may lead to the loss of a large number of traditional jobs by 2031, around 40 lakh new AI-related jobs will be created.

Recently, the Ministry of Education has taken a meaningful initiative to connect the new generation with the technology of the future, Artificial Intelligence, from the primary level itself. In view of this, it has been decided to teach AI in all schools across the country from the third grade onwards from the upcoming academic session 2026-27. These days, two things are being highlighted in the reports on the workforce and employment market in India. First, the new needs of industry and business for the new generation of India and the new digital economy are rapidly increasing the number of AI jobs. Second, opportunities are increasing for Indian talent equipped with AI skills even abroad.

A recent Finance Ministry report stated that jobs requiring AI and machine learning skills increased by 61% in September 2025. Demand for these is also increasing in both IT and non-IT sectors. The Ministry of Labor and Employment, Government of India, in its draft National Manpower Policy 2025, acknowledged that



India's labor market is undergoing structural change. Emphasis on AI and new skill development is now essential. According to the NITI Aayog report, "Roadmap for Job Creation in the AI Economy 2025," while the growing influence of AI could lead to the elimination of a large number of traditional jobs by 2031, approximately 4 million new AI-related jobs will be created.

Undoubtedly, due to the current AI focus, traditional jobs are being eliminated in many companies. However, history shows that technology does not eliminate jobs, but rather transforms their nature and creates new types of jobs. Indeed, the advent of AI has revolutionized the job market, creating new opportunities and roles. AI's impact is not limited to a few sectors; it is transforming many industries and

roles. India's new generation is continuously increasing its contribution to AI work. According to Sam Altman, CEO of Open AI, India is the second largest market for AI in the world. According to Google CEO Sundar Pichai, India can lead the world in the field of AI. According to Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft, AI holds immense potential for India's new generation of mathematically skilled pro-

fessionals.

The AI ecosystem in India is currently expanding rapidly. According to Fortune Business Insights, the AI market in India is growing rapidly. While India's AI market is currently valued at \$13.05 billion in 2025, this market size is projected to reach \$130.63 billion in 2032. India employs over 6 million people in the technology and AI ecosystem. The country has over 1,800 global competence centers, with over 500 focused on AI. India has approximately 1.8 lakh startups, and approximately 89% of new startups launched last year used AI in their products or services. Leading sectors adopting AI include industrial and automotive, consumer goods and retail, banking, financial services and insurance, and healthcare. These sectors contribute approximately 60% of the total value of AI.

Today, there is a global investment race in AI. Recently, on October 14th, Sundar Pichai, CEO of Google, the world's leading digital company, announced the construction of a large data center and artificial intelligence (AI) hub in Visakhapatnam, stating that his company would invest \$15 billion in India over the next five years, i.e., by 2030. This is Google's largest investment in India to date. Undoubtedly, this AI hub is a milestone in India's digital future. In fact, this AI hub will not only create approx-

imately 200,000 new employment opportunities, but will also help promote tech innovation.

Opportunities abroad are also expanding for Indian youth trained in AI skills. Global demographics are in India's favor. Birth rates have fallen in many countries, and the aging population is rapidly increasing. A recent report by the Boston Consulting Group estimated that by 2030, there will be a global shortage of 45 to 50 million workers. In this context, the Global Access to Talent from India Foundation believes that India must develop a highly skilled, trained workforce not only for itself but also for the world. It is also important that the Indian government is now taking steps to provide large-scale employment for its workforce abroad. In the last six years, India has signed labor mobility agreements with more than 20 countries, including developed countries in Europe, Asia, and the Gulf. This allows Indian workforce to be sent abroad through legal means and ensures their safe return and rehabilitation. In this context, the Ministry of External Affairs of India has released the draft of Overseas Mobility Bill 2025 on October 9, through such labor export model, lakhs of youth of India skilled in AI skills will get good employment opportunities abroad.

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