

## The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE

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- ▶ India abstained from a UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution calling on Israel to vacate Palestinian territories, supported by an International Court of Justice (ICJ) opinion.
- ▶ This shift marks a departure from its previous support for such resolutions, reflecting a nuanced approach to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

# India abstains from voting on UNGA resolution against Israel's 'occupation'

**Suhasini Haidar**

NEW DELHI

The effort of the United Nations should be to “build bridges” between the Israeli and Palestinian sides, India said, explaining a decision to abstain from a resolution at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) that called on Israel to vacate Palestinian territories on the basis of an opinion by the International Court of Justice (ICJ). India was among 43 nations that abstained from the resolution, which was adopted by the UN body, as more than two-thirds of the countries present, a massive 124 of 181, voted in favour of it. Sources said the resolution's call for sanctions and stopping arms exports to Israel may have also spurred India's decision to abstain.

“Our joint efforts should be directed towards bringing the two sides closer,



P. Harish

not drive them further apart. We should strive towards building bridges, not furthering the divides,” India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations P. Harish said, in the Explanation of Vote (EoV) after the abstention.

In the explanation, Mr. Harish reiterated India's position on a two-state solution for Israel-Palestine peace, and the importance of the UN charter. He also repeated India's formulation of the violence, which blames neither Hamas for the terrorist attacks in

2023 that killed over 1,200, and the taking of about 250 hostages, nor names Israel for the reprisal bombardment of Gaza and the West Bank that has left more than 35,000 dead, including nearly 15,000 children, according to UN data.

“We unequivocally condemn the terror attacks on Israel on 7 October 2023; we condemn the loss of civilian lives in the conflict; we call for an immediate ceasefire and unconditional release of all hostages; and we stand for unrestricted and sustained humanitarian assistance in the Gaza Strip,” the EoV said, adding that India remains an advocate of “dialogue and diplomacy”.

The abstention by India was a marked departure from its previous record of voting in favour of resolutions that call upon Israel to withdraw troops from occupied Palestinian terri-

tories, including Gaza. Sources said India abstained as it had some differences over the wording of the resolution that imposes a one-year deadline on Israel to withdraw forces from the occupied territories, which some of the other abstaining countries called “unrealistic”.

Indian companies have joint ventures with Israeli defence companies and manufacture, under licence, some parts which go back to parent companies in Israel, which can be sold to any one by them, officials said, while asserting that India's exports to Israel are very low.

The non-binding resolution followed two waves of bombings across Lebanon that killed about 30 people and wounded 3,000 as pagers and personal devices packed with explosives were detonated, which the Lebanese government has blamed Israel for.

**Analysis of the news:**

- This decision emphasises the necessity of dialogue and diplomacy in addressing the complexities of the Israel-Palestine conflict.
- The resolution was passed by 124 of 181 countries, while India was among 43 nations that abstained.
- India's Permanent Representative to the UN, P. Harish, emphasised the need to "build bridges" between Israel and Palestine rather than further divide them.
- India reiterated support for a two-state solution, condemned both the Hamas attacks and Israel's retaliatory bombardment, and called for an immediate ceasefire.
- Differences in resolution wording and its call for sanctions and arms export bans were cited as reasons for India's abstention.

### **Arms To Kyiv' Report**

- A Reuters report claimed that artillery shells sold by Indian manufacturers were diverted to Ukraine by European customers.
- India denied these allegations, calling the report "speculative and misleading."
- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) emphasised India's firm stance on not supplying kinetic equipment to either Russia or Ukraine.
- The Ministry of External Affairs reiterated that India adheres to its international obligations and legal framework for defence exports.
- India remains neutral in the Russia-Ukraine war and has maintained a careful policy of non-involvement.



- The discovery of the Indus Valley Civilisation, announced in 1924 by John Marshall, revolutionised South Asian history.
- It revealed a sophisticated Bronze Age society that thrived in town planning, craftsmanship, and maritime trade, challenging previous historical assumptions about ancient India.

## Harappan civilisation: enigma remains even after 100 years of exploration

**T.S. Subramanian**

Exactly 100 years ago, on September 20, 1924, *The Illustrated London News* published an article containing explosive news which has reverberated down the decades and continues to cast a long shadow in South Asia even a century later. Headlined "First Light on a Long-forgotten Civilisation: New Discoveries of an Unknown Prehistoric Past", the article authored by John Marshall, then Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), announced the discovery of what he called the "civilisation of the Indus Valley".

A century later, this Bronze Age civilisation is called the Harappan civilisation, named after Harappa, now in Pakistan, which was the first site to be discovered in the area. For the past 100 years, the Harappan civilisation has mesmerised and baffled town planners, epigraphists, metallurgists, hydrologists, specialists in ceramics, mathematicians, astronomers, and others. Its enigmas have intrigued them.

At the apogee of its prosperity, it was a "technological powerhouse" that excelled in town planning,

harvesting water, building reservoirs, stadia, warehouses, underground sillage systems, massive fortification walls and building seafaring boats, fabricating bronze and copper artefacts, and in making beads, exquisite painted pottery, and terracotta products. Its craftsman made seals of steatite and carved them with realistic human and animal motifs and a script within a cramped space of two cm by 1.5 cm.

### Uncanny similarity

Two ASI archaeologists were instrumental in the discovery, and were credited by Marshall in his article. Daya Ram Sahni first excavated Harappa in 1921-22, finding seals, painted pottery, and beads. Known as an "industrious, accurate and modest" man, Sahni later became the ASI's first Indian Director-General. The other key player was Rakhal Das Banerji. In 1922, he started excavating Mohenjo-daro, also located in modern-day Pakistan, and found seals, pottery, copper products, and crucibles at that site.

In June 1924, Marshall summoned Sahni and Banerji to meet him in his office in Shimla with their finds. He was struck by the uncanny similarity in the



**Marks of a civilisation:** Bathing platforms, a well, drains, and the remains of a curved drainage wall at Harappa. N. RAM

objects found at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, though the two sites were 640 km apart. He interpreted the similarities and announced the discovery of the "civilisation of the Indus Valley" in the London newspaper.

The Harappan civilisation can be divided into an early phase (3200 BC to 2600 BC), the mature period (2600 BC to 1900 BC),

and the late phase (1900 BC to 1500 BC), when it decayed and collapsed. Mohenjo-daro, Harappa, and Ganweriwala, all now in Pakistan, and Rakhigarhi and Dholavira, both in India, are the five of the biggest Harappan sites out of nearly 2,000 in the civilisational area, which is spread over 1.5 million sq.km in India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. There are 1,500

sites in northwestern India, including in Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. The village of Daimabad on the banks of the Godavari river in Maharashtra is the southernmost outpost of the Harappan civilisation. There are about 500 sites in Pakistan, and a few in Afghanistan. The civilisation burgeoned on the banks of

the Indus and Saraswati rivers, the latter of which is believed to have dried up around 1900 BC.

According to Indus civilisation scholar Asko Parpola, "its most characteristic features" were "the fully developed Indus script; finely carved stamp seals with writing and/or an animal or some other iconographic motif...; standardised measures, including

cubic weights made of chert carefully cut and polished, employing a combination of binary and decimal systems...; the large-scale use of burnt brick, standardised in size, with the ratio 1:2:4, the most effective for bonding; exquisite lapidary art, featuring highly developed micro-drilling of very long beads made of hard carnelian, decorated with chemically stained motifs." (From Parpola's *The Roots of Hinduism, The Early Aryans and the Indus Civilisation*, 2015, Oxford University Press).

### Filling the gap

Vasant Shinde, who has excavated several Harappan sites in India, noted that the civilisation's discovery was significant on two counts. First, most historians were of the opinion,

before it was discovered, that settled life in this part of the world first occurred around the sixth century BCE, leaving a gap in South Asian history. Historian Vincent Smith had said India jumped from the Stone Age to the [Buddhist] stupas. "The discovery of the Harappan civilisation filled the so-called gap and pushed back in one stroke the antiquity of the settled life in this part of the world

by more than 3,000 years," Dr. Shinde said.

Second, the discovery added one more ancient civilisation in Asia, besides the Egyptian and the Mesopotamian, and unravelling the Harappan civilisation's maritime contacts with West Asia from 3000 BC.

Iravatham Mahadevan, who battled for 50 years to decipher the Indus script, had asserted that the civilisation was both pre-Aryan and non-Aryan. Mehrgarh, in Balochistan, is where it all began around 7000 BC. "The roots of the Harappan civilisation lie in Mehrgarh, around eight millennium BC," asserted R.S. Bisht, who excavated Dholavira in Gujarat from 1989-90 to 2004-05.

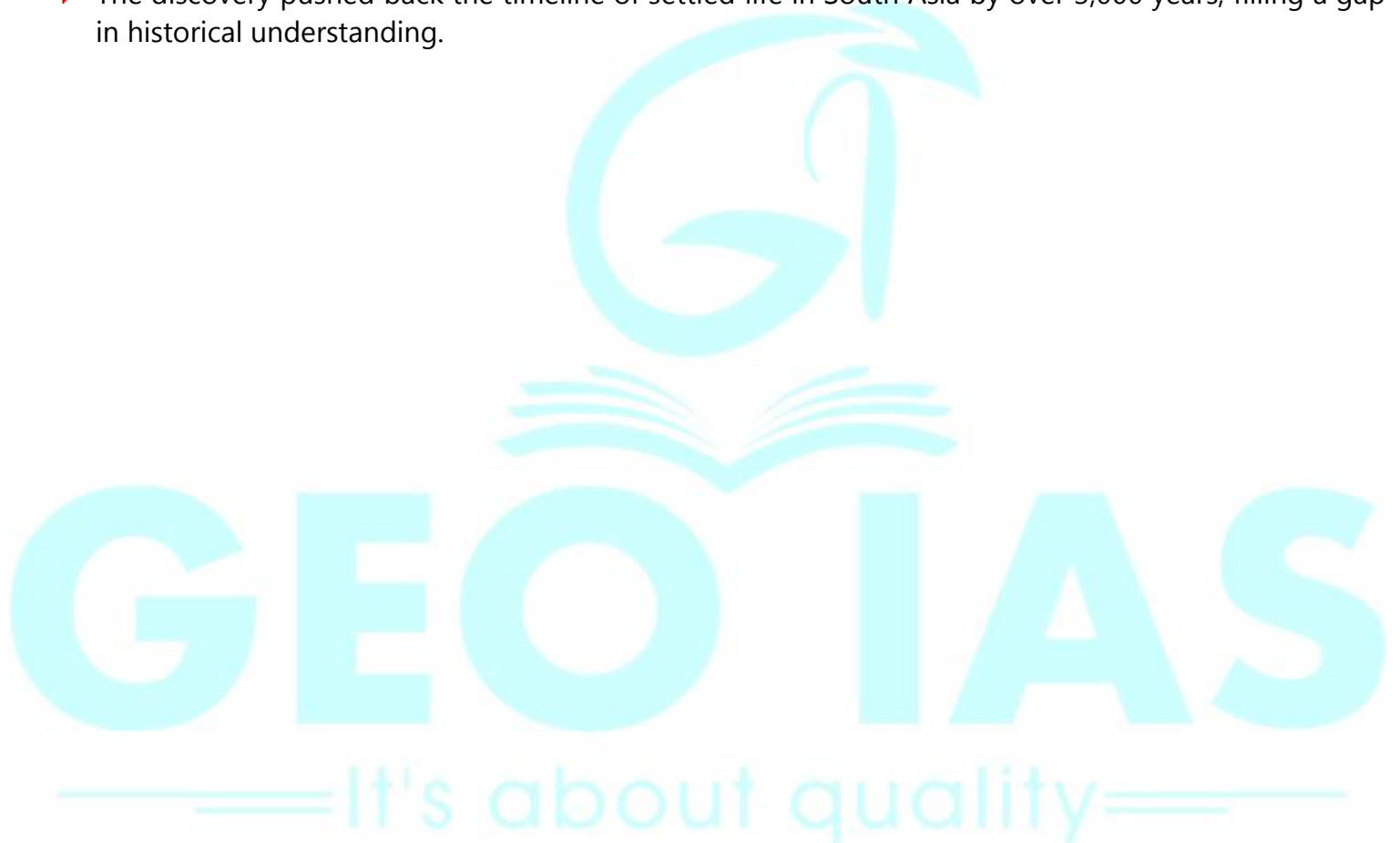
The book *The Wonder that was Harappan Civilisation*, brought out by *The Hindu*, has reproduced Marshall's story, first published in *The Illustrated London News*. On January 4, 1928, *The Hindu* had used a full page to publish a summary of his statement on the subject. Read the original report by John Marshall at [bit.ly/harappastory](http://bit.ly/harappastory) (This article is based partly on extracts from *The Wonder that was Harappan Civilisation*, curated by Mr. Subramanian.)

## Indus Valley Civilisation:

- On September 20, 1924, *The Illustrated London News* published an article by John Marshall, Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), announcing the discovery of the Indus Valley Civilisation.
- This Bronze Age civilisation, later called the Harappan Civilisation, was named after Harappa, one of the first sites excavated, now located in Pakistan.
- The Harappan civilisation has fascinated scholars in various fields for the past century, with its advanced town planning, water management, bronze and copper artefacts creation, and intricate seal carvings.
- Daya Ram Sahni and Rakhal Das Banerji, two ASI archaeologists, were instrumental in the discovery, excavating Harappa (1921-22) and Mohenjo-daro (1922), respectively.
- Marshall noticed the similarity of artefacts found at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, located 640 km apart, leading him to conclude that they were part of the same civilization.

## Daily News Analysis

- The Harappan civilisation is divided into three phases: early (3200-2600 BC), mature (2600-1900 BC), and late (1900-1500 BC).
- Major sites include Mohenjo-daro, Harappa, Ganweriwala, Rakhigarhi, and Dholavira, spanning across Pakistan and India.
- The civilisation thrived on the banks of the Indus and Saraswati rivers, with over 1,500 sites in India and around 500 in Pakistan.
- Indus scholar Asko Parpola highlighted key features such as the Indus script, burnt brick construction, and carnelian bead production.
- The discovery pushed back the timeline of settled life in South Asia by over 3,000 years, filling a gap in historical understanding.





The rise of hospital-acquired infections (HAIs) in India has prompted concerns regarding patient safety and healthcare quality.

- ▶ Recent cases highlight the ethical dilemmas faced by patients and families, particularly in the context of financial burdens and accountability.
- ▶ This underscores the urgent need for enhanced infection control and transparent reporting practices.

# The true cost of hospital-acquired infections

**Abdul Ghafur**

A high-profile medicolegal case has emerged in Mumbai. An orthopaedic surgeon and a well-known hospital are facing litigation due to a post-operative infection following a knee replacement. The plaintiff, a professional with significant income, has claimed substantial losses due to months of inability to work, compounded by extensive treatment expenses.

Simultaneously, in Bangalore, a contrasting yet equally compelling situation unfolded. I was consulted by family of a patient who had been in the ICU for over two weeks on a ventilator. Unfortunately, the patient developed ventilator-associated *Acinetobacter pneumonia* – a serious Hospital-Acquired Infection (HAI). Despite the hospital's reputation for high standards of care, the family questioned why they should bear the burden for an infection acquired under hospital care. Their concerns were twofold: the ethical dilemma of the hospital allegedly benefiting from the extended treatment required for the HAI and the principle of the hospital's responsibility in preventing such infections. This case represents a scenario where the family sought a waiver of bills for treating the HAI, contrasting with seeking compensation. They argued that if the infection was hospital-acquired, the hospital should absorb the costs.



The family argued that if the infection was hospital-acquired, the hospital should absorb the costs. GETTY IMAGES

Both the Mumbai and Bangalore cases illustrate common but critical challenges faced in healthcare systems, particularly in accredited hospitals. They reflect the broader issues of HAI management, financial implications for patients, and the ethical considerations of healthcare delivery. HAIs are infections that patients acquire while receiving treatment for medical or surgical conditions. Globally, HAIs are among the most common complications within healthcare settings, significantly increasing morbidity, mortality, and financial costs.

### Country perspectives

In the US, the Medicare and Medicaid insurance system do not reimburse costs associated with certain HAIs, a policy that incentivises hospitals to prevent infections. U.S. private insurers are also following the same system. Hospitals do not charge patients

for the cost of managing HAIs, enhancing accountability. This is supported by platforms like the Hospital Compare website, which publicly displays HAI rates among other quality indicators, allowing patients to make informed healthcare decisions.

India faces unique challenges due to its diverse healthcare standards and high levels of AMR. Despite many hospitals in India obtaining Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation, there is no obligation for these institutions to publicly disclose their HAI rates. Though all NABH (National Accreditation Board for Hospitals) accredited hospitals generate the HAI quality indicator data on a monthly basis, they are not obliged to disclose data.

### Proposed Solutions

All NABH and JCI-accredited hospitals should be required to disclose their HAI rates on a common platform, possibly under the oversight of institutions like the NABH, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), or the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). JCI accredited hospitals should follow JCI benchmarks while NABH accredited hospitals can follow a benchmark that can be set using the ICMR-NCDC surveillance network data. Indian benchmark values will be significantly higher than the US CDC benchmark, due to inherent challenges that Indian hospitals face, especially resource limitations.

While direct non-reimburse-

ment for HAI-associated treatments might lead hospitals to off-load costs onto patients, insurance companies could instead mandate that a portion of the payouts be directed towards improving infection control standards. For out-of-pocket expenses, hospitals, especially those with JCI accreditation, should align with international practices by not charging patients for the treatment of HAIs. For NABH accredited hospitals, a no loss-no profit model for HAI treatment could be considered. Based on the claims of quality and the benchmark followed by the individual hospital, a reimbursement model can be followed.

Public education plays a crucial role. Patients and families need to understand that not all infections occurring during a hospital stay are due to negligence—some, like a fungal pneumonia in a cancer patient, are unrelated to hospital procedures. Patients should refrain from unnecessarily litigating, and understand that hospitals can only try their best to reduce HAI and not eliminate them.

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**Analysis of the News:**

➔ **Hospital-Acquired Infections (HAIs)**

- Hospital-acquired infections (HAIs) are infections that patients acquire during their stay in a healthcare facility, typically occurring 48 hours or more after admission.
- These infections can arise from various sources, including surgical procedures, medical devices, and the hospital environment.

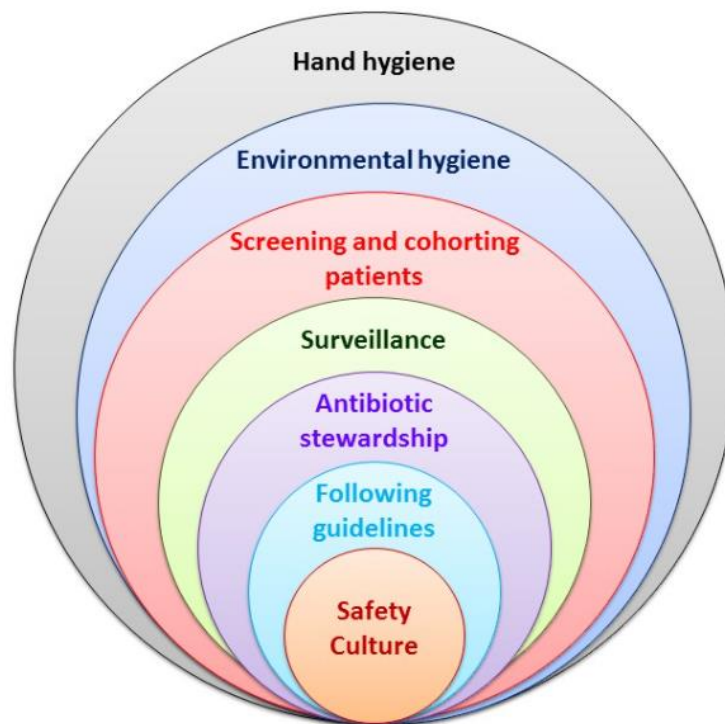
➔ **Concerns with HAIs**

- **Increased Morbidity and Mortality:** HAIs contribute significantly to complications, prolonged hospital stays, and increased mortality rates.
- **Financial Burden:** Patients face substantial medical expenses, including prolonged treatment and rehabilitation, leading to economic strain.
- **Ethical Dilemmas:** Questions arise regarding hospital accountability for infection prevention and the ethical implications of billing patients for HAIs.
- **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR):** HAIs often involve drug-resistant organisms, complicating treatment and increasing public health concerns.

➔ **Comparison: Developed Countries vs. India**

- In developed countries, stringent regulations and accountability measures significantly reduce hospital-acquired infections (HAIs), with mandatory reporting and non-reimbursement policies incentivizing prevention.
- In contrast, India faces diverse healthcare standards and inadequate HAI reporting, leading to higher infection rates and financial burdens on patients, highlighting the need for improved infection control measures.

**7 strategies to prevent healthcare-associated infections**



### Way Forward

- **Mandatory Disclosure:** Require National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH) and accredited hospitals to publicly disclose HAI rates, fostering transparency and accountability.
- **Benchmarking Standards:** Establish Indian benchmarks for HAIs based on local data, aiding hospitals in improving infection control practices.
- **Insurance Collaboration:** Encourage insurance companies to direct funds towards enhancing hospital infection control rather than solely covering costs of HAIs.
- **Patient Education:** Raise awareness among patients and families regarding the nature of HAIs, promoting understanding of the complexities involved in hospital care.
- **No Charge Policy:** Implement policies in accredited hospitals to not charge patients for treatment of HAIs, ensuring equitable healthcare access..





In Kerala, an unusually high number of amoebic meningoencephalitis cases emerged in 2024, affecting children and adults.

- Despite the infection's high fatality rate, Kerala's early diagnosis and adapted treatment protocol significantly reduced mortality.

## How Kerala reduced mortality from amoebic meningoencephalitis

Primary amoebic meningoencephalitis is caused by infection with *Naegleria fowleri*, a microscopic amoeba commonly called a "brain-eating amoeba". This infection destroys brain tissue, causing severe brain swelling and death in most cases. PAM is rare and usually occurs in healthy children, teens, and young adults, and has a high fatality rate

C Maya

Children frolicking in neighbourhood ponds in the summer months is a common sight in Kerala, a State that has an abundance of water bodies. The summer this year, however, took all the pleasure out of the water games for children when many young children fell prey to a rare but lethal infection of the central nervous system, amoebic meningoencephalitis, caused by free-living amoebae (FLA) found in freshwater, lakes, and rivers.

Reassurances from public health experts that the infections were sporadic did nothing to ease public anxiety because of the frequency with which amoebic meningoencephalitis was being reported in the State from various districts. Most of the affected were young children from 5-15. This picture changed dramatically in the month of August when, quite unusually, an all-adult case cluster of amoebic meningoencephalitis – eight cases in all – was reported from Thiruvananthapuram.

But despite reporting an unusually high number of 19 cases of amoebic meningoencephalitis in five months, Kerala also managed to create medical history of sorts because it managed to save 14 out of the 19 cases, bringing down the mortality rate of amoebic meningoencephalitis, from the global rate of 97% to 26%. On September 12, all 10 persons who were undergoing treatment for amoebic meningoencephalitis at Thiruvananthapuram Government Medical College hospital were discharged, having completed the 28-day treatment course of the State-adapted U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention treatment protocol.

"This is a unique feat for Kerala, which is sure to enter global literature on the disease. It was a huge learning experience in itself because we could show that if identified and treated early, we have a fighting chance to save patients with amoebic meningoencephalitis. The infection usually deteriorates so fast that there is no therapeutic window for clinicians to intervene," says R. Aravind, head of Infectious Diseases at Government Medical College Hospital, Thiruvananthapuram.

When sporadic cases of amoebic meningoencephalitis began to be reported from North Kerala in May-June, all clinical features were suggestive of primary amoebic meningoencephalitis (PAM), a disease caused usually by infection with *Naegleria fowleri*, a microscopic amoeba commonly called the "brain-eating amoeba." The State then set up an experts' group to bring out technical guidelines on the prevention,



A pond in Feroke, Kozhikode district which was closed after a 12-year-old boy who swam there was diagnosed with amoebic meningoencephalitis recently. FILE PHOTO

diagnosis and treatment of amoebic meningoencephalitis.

### What is PAM?

Primary amoebic meningoencephalitis (PAM) is a disease caused usually by infection with *Naegleria fowleri*, a microscopic amoeba commonly called a "brain-eating amoeba". This infection destroys brain tissue, causing severe brain swelling and death in most cases. PAM is rare and usually occurs in otherwise healthy children, teens, and young adults, and has a high fatality rate because of rapid onset and delayed diagnosis.

"Only 11 survivors of confirmed *N. fowleri* PAM have been reported in medical literature until now. There is not much in the literature on amoebic meningoencephalitis caused by FLA other than *N. fowleri*. Kerala has reported amoebic infections caused by *N. fowleri*, *Vermamoeba vermiformis* as well as *Acanthamoeba*. Though we do not have the genomic sequencing information on all cases, and are yet to confirm if all were cases of PAM were caused by *N. fowleri*, we just added 14 more persons to the list of survivors," Dr. Aravind says.

**Unusual cases and case clusters**  
Kerala also reported an unusual case cluster of amoebic meningoencephalitis from Athiyannoor grama panchayat in Neyyattinkara taluk in Thiruvananthapuram. A detailed outbreak investigation, however revealed that it was not mere exposure to a mossy, green algae-ridden pond in the neighbourhood, but risky behaviour on the part of a group of youth that landed them all in the medical college hospital with the life-threatening amoebic meningoencephalitis infection. Two weeks after the death of a youth from the locality following encephalitis, with a history of exposure to a stagnant water body, when

may not have been intact, aiding the quick entry of amoeba into the brain during nasal ablation.

### Aggressive treatment

The State set up a special medical board, and the patients were treated as per the protocol with a cocktail of antibiotics. What turned the tide in favour of the patients was the introduction of the drug Miltefosin into the antibiotic cocktail. Miltefosin is an anti-parasitic agent, but its use is rare now, and supply is also limited. Amphotericin B has been the mainstay of PAM treatment, but Miltefosin was one of the cocktail of drugs that seemed to give good results, and all of the well-documented PAM survivors across the globe have received it as part of their treatment regimen.

It was pro-active case-finding by clinicians – checking for the presence of amoeba in CSF samples whenever acute encephalitis syndrome (AES) cases were encountered – which threw up more cases. This high degree of clinical suspicion on encountering unusual cases of AES is being maintained by all clinicians in the State since its first Nipah encounter in 2018.

### New learnings and precautions

With more amoebic encephalitis cases reported from multiple locations, one should assume that amoeba is present in most water bodies except in chlorinated water and that the increased environmental heat and other aquatic factors may be aiding the increase in its concentration. The focus of the State health department is now on creating IEC campaigns for the public, to narrow down possible risks and incorporating the new learnings that emerged from this intense encounter with amoebic encephalitis.

The precautions now specify that no one should dive headlong into water bodies and that it is safer to use nasal plugs while swimming. Persons who have had head injuries or nasal surgery in the past should absolutely stay away from entering stagnant water bodies. Under no circumstances should one snort water into the nose while washing one's face or when swimming in ponds. Those in the habit of sinus irrigation should use sterilised water and not tap water.

The current directive to all clinicians is to take a close look at the CSF for the presence of amoeba in all cases of meningoencephalitis, irrespective of whether the patient has had direct or indirect contact with water bodies. This is because early diagnosis and treatment might be life-saving in an infection which is almost always fatal, a learning experience that has been unique to Kerala.

(maya.c@thehindu.co.in)

### THE GIST

Most of the affected were children. This changed dramatically in August when, quite unusually, an all-adult case cluster of amoebic meningoencephalitis – eight cases in all – was reported from Thiruvananthapuram

There was a lone case of an urban dweller, with no contact with water bodies. Water at his home was sourced from an overhead tank which had not been cleaned and probably harboured amoeba. The patient also had a previous head injury, aiding the entry of amoeba during nasal ablation

With more cases reported from multiple locations, one should assume that amoeba is present in most water bodies except in chlorinated water and that the increased environmental heat may be aiding the increase in concentration

### Analysis of the news:

- Kerala faced an unusually high number of amoebic meningoencephalitis cases, reporting 19 cases in five months.
- Despite the infection's 97% global fatality rate, Kerala saved 14 out of 19 patients, reducing the mortality rate to 26%.
- Early identification and intervention played a crucial role in saving lives.
- The State adopted the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention treatment protocol for effective management.

## Daily News Analysis

- ▶ A cocktail of antibiotics, including Miltefosine, was used as part of the treatment.
- ▶ Proactive case-finding involved testing cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) samples for amoebic infections in all encephalitis cases.
- ▶ The high degree of clinical suspicion and early diagnosis helped clinicians act quickly and save patients.



UN experts have raised concerns about the need for global cooperation in artificial intelligence development, highlighting the exclusion of developing countries from discussions.

- Their report emphasises the risks associated with unchecked AI, advocating for scientific assessments and a coordination structure within the UN to address emerging threats and promote equitable use.

## AI development cannot be left to market whim, UN warns

Agence France-Presse  
UNITED NATIONS, U.S.

The development of artificial intelligence should not be guided by market forces alone, UN (United Nations) experts cautioned on Thursday, calling for the creation of tools for global cooperation.

But they held back from suggesting the creation of a muscular worldwide governing body to oversee the rollout and the evolution of a technology, the proliferation of which has raised fears around possible biases, misuse and dependence.

The panel of around 40 experts from the fields of technology, law and data protection was established by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in

October.

Their report, published days before the start of a high-profile "Summit of the Future," raises the alarm over the lack of global governance of artificial intelligence as well as the effective exclusion of developing countries from debates about the technology's future.

Of the UN's 193 members, just seven are part of the seven major initiatives linked to AI, while 118 are entirely absent—mostly nations of the global south.

"There is, today, a global governance deficit with respect to Artificial Intelligence," which by its nature is cross-border, the experts warn in their report.

"Artificial Intelligence must serve humanity equitably and safely," Mr.



Governance deficit: UN experts warn there is a global governance deficit with respect to AI. REUTERS

Guterres said this week.

"Left unchecked, the dangers posed by artificial intelligence could have serious implications for democracy, peace, and

stability."

"Too late?"

To the backdrop of his clarion call, the experts called on UN members to

put in place mechanisms to grease the wheels of global cooperation on the issue, as well as to prevent unintended proliferation.

The development, deployment and use of such a technology cannot be left to the whims of markets alone," the experts say in the report.

They called firstly for the creation of a group of scientific experts on artificial intelligence modeled on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) forum of experts, whose reports are the last word on the issue of climate change.

The panel would brief the international community on emerging risks, identify research needs as well as how it could be used to alleviate hunger, poverty, and gender inequality, among other goals.

That proposal is included in the draft Global Digital Compact, still under discussion, which is due to

be adopted Sunday at the "Summit of the Future."

The experts endorsed setting up a light-touch "coordination" structure within the United Nations secretariat.

But it stops short of a fully-fledged international governance body—like that sought by Mr. Guterres—based on the model of the UN's nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

"If the risks of artificial intelligence become more serious, and more concentrated, it might become necessary for Member States to consider a more robust international institution with monitoring, reporting, verification, and enforcement powers," the experts said.

The authors acknow-

ledge that owing to the warp speed of change in AI, it would be pointless to attempt to draw up a comprehensive list of dangers presented by the ever-evolving technology.

But they singled out the perils of disinformation for democracy, increasingly realistic deepfakes—particularly pornographic ones, as well as the evolution of autonomous weapons and AI use by criminal and terrorist groups.

"Given the speed, autonomy and opacity of AI systems, however, waiting for a threat to emerge may mean that any response will come too late," the experts said. "Continued scientific assessments and policy dialogue would ensure that the world is not surprised."

### Global Cooperation on AI

- UN experts emphasise that artificial intelligence development should not be driven solely by market forces.
- The call is for tools to enhance global cooperation and governance around AI technology.

### Current Governance Deficit

- A report highlights a significant global governance deficit regarding AI, particularly affecting developing countries.
- Of the 193 UN member states, only seven participate in major AI initiatives, while 118 are absent, mostly from the global south.

### Proposed Solutions

- Experts advocate for the establishment of a scientific expert group on AI, akin to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).
- This group would assess emerging risks and identify research needs to use AI for alleviating issues like hunger and inequality.

### Recommendations for UN Structure

- A light-touch coordination structure within the UN secretariat is proposed, though a robust international governance body is not suggested at this time.
- Experts acknowledge that if AI risks escalate, a more comprehensive international institution with monitoring and enforcement powers may become necessary.

### Identified Risks



## Daily News Analysis

- ▶ Key concerns include disinformation, realistic deepfakes, autonomous weapons, and potential misuse by criminal entities.
- ▶ Experts warn that the rapid evolution of AI could render responses to threats too late if proactive measures are not taken.



# Acclamation for an Indian leadership that still endures

**D**uring his state visit to India last month (August 19-21, 2024), Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim delivered a lecture at the Indian Council of World Affairs on August 20. Its subject was "Towards a Rising Global South: Leveraging on Malaysia-India Ties". Mr. Anwar dwelt on his vision of the Global South – its unity amidst "all our diversity, differences and discretions". More importantly, he said that the rise of the Global South is not "meant to exclude the Global North" but to "work together as equals within our complex strategic contexts".

## High praise

He praised India's role in imparting energy to the evolution of the positions of the Global South which, he said, were in keeping with the principle of cooperating with the Global North. As he put it, "And to me, India has welcomed this reality with grace, fore-vision, and most importantly, a plan. India's excellent G20 Chairmanship last year and the inaugural Voice of Global South Summits made it amply clear that India is prepared to shape the Global South agenda with its partners, hand in hand".

This high praise came from a leader whose scholarship and intellectualism, is acknowledged worldwide. This is a scholarship and intellectualism that has been honed through years of political experience, suffering and study, which has seen Mr. Anwar's evolution from Islamism to a commitment to inclusivism. This would have been music to the ears of the Narendra Modi government but not so his references to India's leadership that emerged from the freedom movement and the leader who gave shape to the Republic in its formative years – Jawaharlal Nehru. Mr. Anwar's words about Nehru illustrate that despite all the efforts of the Sangh Parivar, Nehru's reputation abroad has not been tarnished. The Bharatiya Janata Party and the Sangh have left no stone unturned in going after Nehru. Indeed, he is held responsible for



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The Malaysian Prime Minister's speech in India, with its references to Vivekananda, the Mahatma, Tagore and Nehru, is a pointer to how the world still holds them in high esteem

almost all of the current national ills. But what Mr. Anwar says on Nehru is indicative of how large numbers globally continue to view him.

Mr. Anwar recalled Nehru's association with Malaysia's first Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman and thereafter spoke evocatively about Nehru. It is only if his words are quoted fully that their meaning comes through. He said, "Whither do we go and what shall be our endeavour?" As we all know, that is the question that Pandit Nehru posed in his 'A Tryst With Destiny' speech, and so succinctly answered: "To bring freedom and opportunity to the common man, to the peasants and workers of India; to fight and end poverty and ignorance and disease; to build up a prosperous, democratic and progressive nation, and to create social, economic and political institutions which will ensure justice and fullness of life to every man and woman".

Mr. Anwar thereafter said, "In a world fraught with challenges and uncertainties, it is the unwavering commitment to these principles that will guide us towards a brighter, more just tomorrow. The legacy of the founding fathers is not merely a testament to their time, but a timeless beacon, urging us to dream, to strive, and to forge ahead with undaunted courage and unshakeable resolve".

## Still relevant

Significantly, Mr. Anwar began his address by quoting Swami Vivekananda on the 'march' of ideas from this land accompanied by words which had "blessings" behind them and "peace" before them. Remarkably, he noted that Vivekananda was the chief disciple of Ramakrishna – perhaps no other foreign leader has done so. Pleading for multiculturalism and inclusivity, Mr. Anwar recalled what Gandhiji had said, "Hate the sin and not the sinner" is a precept which, though easy enough to understand, is rarely practi[s]ed, and that is why the poison of hatred spreads in the world." And,

he concluded his address by quoting Tagore whose words he said "echo through the corridors of time, urging us to embrace not the comforts of safety, but the unyielding courage to confront adversity head long: "Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers, but to be fearless in facing them".

Mr. Anwar's reference to Swami Vivekananda, Gandhiji, Tagore and Nehru point to the agonising difficulty of the Sangh Parivar. While it has denigrated Nehru and sought to co-opt some great personalities of the freedom movement and the Indian Renaissance, its own venerated ideologues and leaders are respected in many quarters in India but they continue to be known only in niche circles abroad.

Right-wing ideologues may assert that this is because they belonged to indigenous cultural traditions which were ignored by the colonialists and that that tendency continues. The fact is that the timeless message of spiritual unity of Vivekananda, the universalism of Tagore and Gandhiji's emphasis on non-violence also derived from indigenous Indian traditions but eschewed muscular exclusivism. And, Nehru's ideal of an inclusive, modern society animated by the scientific spirit was a beacon light for many newly decolonised countries as it should be to India today.

## The broad view

India's present policies to ensure that the power of digital technologies are harnessed for popular welfare are gaining the positive attention of the Global South. These are practical measures which have great importance in the lives of the impoverished everywhere and are important for governance. They evoke foreign admiration but in the realm of political and social philosophies, the ideologues of the Parivar do not inspire as do Gandhiji and Nehru and others who Mr. Anwar mentioned. And, this can hardly be attributed to the conspiracies of left liberals.

## GS Paper 02 : International Relations

**PYQ : (UPSC CSE (M) GS-2 2019) :** "The long-sustained image of India as a leader of the oppressed and marginalised Nations has disappeared on account of its new found role in the emerging global order". Elaborate. (250 words/15m)

**UPSC Mains Practice Question** Discuss India's evolving role in the new world order, particularly its leadership within the Global South. How do India's historical values of inclusivity and non-violence contribute to its global diplomatic strategies? (250 w /15 m)

### Context :

- During his state visit to India (August 19-21, 2024), Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim delivered a lecture emphasising unity in the Global South, praising India's leadership in fostering cooperation with the Global North.
- He also highlighted the enduring global influence of figures like Nehru, Vivekananda, Gandhiji, and Tagore.

### Rise of the Global South

- The rise of the Global South is a defining feature of the new world order, emphasising unity amidst diversity.
- The Global South aims to cooperate with the Global North as equals, rather than adopting an exclusionary stance.
- India has emerged as a pivotal player in shaping this vision, fostering cooperation between both global regions.

### India's Leadership in the Global South

- India has been instrumental in driving the Global South's agenda on the global stage.
- India's leadership during its G20 Chairmanship and the inaugural Voice of Global South Summits showcased its commitment to forging a united front.
- These efforts are recognized as embodying foresight, grace, and a well-structured plan to elevate the Global South's role.

### Vision of Inclusivity and Cooperation

- India's approach to global leadership is rooted in inclusivity, a reflection of the country's historical values and its commitment to balancing relationships with all global powers.
- By promoting a framework of cooperation with the Global North while leading the Global South, India exemplifies diplomacy based on mutual respect and equality.
- The new world order shaped by India envisions collaboration rather than confrontation, driving global progress.

### Historical Legacy and Global Influence

- India's foundational ideals, laid out during its freedom struggle, continue to inspire global leadership.
- The iconic "Tryst with Destiny" speech laid out a vision for justice, equality, and freedom for all, which remains central to India's role in global governance.
- India's early leaders envisioned a democratic, prosperous nation focused on uplifting the common man, principles that guide the nation in its current role.

### Multiculturalism and Spiritual Unity



- India's influence in the new world order extends beyond economic and political spheres to a spiritual and philosophical realm.
- The message of spiritual unity and inclusivity, articulated by Indian philosophers and leaders, continues to resonate globally.
- These ideals have helped India build strong connections with nations seeking cooperation beyond mere economic interests.

### **Advocacy for Non-Violence and Inclusivity**

- India's global leadership also draws on its historical advocacy for non-violence and inclusivity, ideals championed by its prominent historical figures.
- The principle of "hating the sin, not the sinner," a call for compassion and understanding, is a powerful philosophy that India projects onto the global stage.
- These principles serve as a moral compass in navigating the challenges of global governance in an increasingly divided world.

### **India's Digital and Governance Initiatives**

- India's present-day policies, especially in harnessing digital technologies for popular welfare, are gaining international attention.
- These initiatives, designed to empower marginalised and impoverished populations, are practical measures that hold great significance for the Global South.
- India's technological advancements, particularly in digital governance, are helping shape a more inclusive world order.

### **Global Admiration for India's Vision**

- While India's digital initiatives are praised, it is the nation's philosophical and spiritual ideals that resonate most deeply with the global community.
- India's leadership in the new world order is thus a combination of practical governance measures and the projection of universal values.
- India's ability to inspire both respect and admiration, through its balanced approach to global cooperation, defines its role in the emerging world order.

### **Conclusion**

- India's role in the new world order is characterised by its emphasis on unity, inclusivity, and cooperation.
  - The country's leadership in the Global South, combined with its commitment to bridging the gap with the Global North, has placed India at the forefront of global governance.
  - By drawing on its historical legacy of non-violence, inclusivity, and spiritual unity, India continues to inspire a world striving for equality and justice in a complex strategic environment.
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