

THE TIMES OF INDIA

# 4 South Indian states in top 6 list

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

fering from mental illnesses. Psychiatrist Dr Samir Parekh from Max Hospital said, "Untreated mental illnesses are the significant reason behind suicides. States which have recorded high suicide rates must immediately starting district level mental health programmes." A psychiatrist at AIIMS said, "Reputation and economic status holds tremendous value in southern states. People don't take it very well when they fail to cope with a fall in standards."

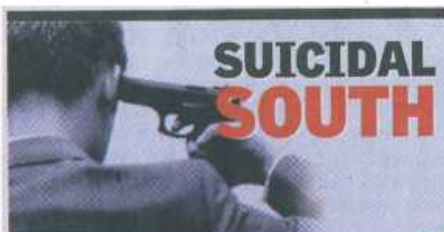
**New Delhi:** South Indians aren't coping well with stress, be it the uncertain times affecting our economy or the pressures at home. And it's showing in the National Crime Records Bureau's latest figures on suicides in the country.

Even though Maharashtra recorded the highest number of suicides committed in 2007 — 15,184 — four of the top six states with the highest suicide rates are from South India. While Andhra Pradesh recorded 14,882 suicide deaths, Tamil Nadu registered 13,811 deaths followed by Karnataka (12,304) and Kerala (8,962). What's worse, of these four states, three have recorded an increase in the number of suicides in 2007 compared to 2006. They include AP with a 12.1% increase, TN (11.5%) and Karnataka (0.8%).

Experts claim that earlier studies have never pointed to geographical factors behind increased suicide rates. However, they admit that poor mental health programmes in some

South Indian states and its subsequent failure to identify and treat people with illnesses like depression could have led to the spike in the number of suicides.

The NCRB report confirms the explanation. Mental illness was found to be one of the major causes behind people committing suicide in South Indian states. Around 1,982 of those who committed suicide in TN, 637 in Karnataka and 1,384 in Kerala were suf-



### States With Most Suicide Cases

	2006	2007	Change
Maharashtra	15,494	15,184	-2.0%
Andhra Pradesh	13,276	14,882	12.1%
West Bengal	15,725	14,860	-5.5%
Tamil Nadu	12,381	13,811	11.5%
Karnataka	12,212	12,304	0.8%
Kerala	9,026	8,962	-0.7%

### Suicide-Prone Cities

	2006	2007	Change
Bangalore	2,008	2,429	21.0%
Chennai	2,427	2,313	-4.7%
Delhi	1,296	1,246	-3.9%
Mumbai	1,195	1,141	-4.5%
Hyderabad	603	746	23.7%
Pune	529	583	10.2%

health programmes till now did not pay much attention to. "We are now ready with a special suicide prevention strategy for schools and workplaces. Teachers can now to identify students with mental problems and those who are likely to take drastic steps. Training will be given to MBBSf doctors to identify as well as counsel patients suffering from mental health problems at district and sub-division levels," an official said.

The health ministry admits that suicide has become a serious problem which mental