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No. 5, AKS Nagar, Near Gandhi Park, Coimbatore - 641 001

**GS Paper II – Social Issue**

**Date: 04.07.26**

## Counting cancer

**Making cancer a notifiable disease at the national level is the way forward**

**W**hat's good for the goose is surely good for the geese. What the States will benefit from, the country could too. In India, cancer is not a notifiable disease at the national level, keeping with the Health Ministry's position that such notification is only for communicable diseases. Population-based cancer registries and hospital-based cancer registries are currently the only national tool at the disposal of the Centre to count cancer cases. Unfortunately, these registries cover about 10%-16 % of the population, and have an urban, government health care set-up skew. However, several States have taken the lead on this front, making cancer a notifiable disease within their boundaries. Telangana is the latest to join the list of States that have made cancer a notifiable disease, bringing the total number of States doing so to 17.

With the Global Cancer Observatory (affiliated to the World Health Organization) projecting an estimated increase of 1.05 million cases between 2022 (1.41 million) and 2045 (2.46 million), the rise is expected to be a staggering over 74%. Given these projections, thanks to an increasing life span and ageing demographics, changes in lifestyle and diet, it becomes all the more important to be armed with data and get ready for vanguard action from a public health point of view. While State action can, to an extent, solve the data question, any benefit thus derived from notifying health authorities of every single case of cancer, it cannot become a rubric by which the nation can contour its cancer control programme. Apart from existing registries covering mostly urban and semi-urban posts, care in India is also delivered in good measure through the private sector and that data set is not uniformly captured. The Indian government must pay heed to its own counsel, the Indian Council of Medical Research, National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research (now ICMR-NINE) had recommended that cancer be made a notifiable disease years ago. It is a fact that establishing cancer as a notifiable disease will mean a sudden increase in the number of cases being recorded, but it must not be considered a liability. Instead, it is merely part of the process of crafting a studied, and evidence-based response – health care and information, education, and communication (IEC) – to cancer at the country level. While bold advances in research and treatment methodologies have relieved cancer from the fear and the utter helplessness surrounding it, the heart of the issue remains the lack of data. Taking lessons from the States, the Centre must recalibrate and make cancer a notifiable disease in India.

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## GS Paper II – Governance

# Eight held in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh over 'links' with JeM

**Abhinay Deshpande**  
AHMEDABAD

Eight persons, including two teenagers, have been arrested by the Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) for their alleged links with the Pakistan-based terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), officials said on Friday.

They were arrested from Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh in simultaneous operations on Thursday. ATS officials said they were trying to establish a Jaish network in Gujarat and other parts of the country, and planning terror attacks. The arrested accused have been identified as Mudassir Ghaziwala, 22; Ibrahim Ghagha, 30; Zakariya Durani Mohammed Ammar Ghagha, 21; Ahmed Gajiwala, 19; Mohammed Abdul Saadi, 22; Mufti Faujan Dauwa, 40; Bilal Durani Ghagha, 18; and Mohammed Amin Palanpur, 21. "They are residents of Gujarat's Patan, Navsari and Banaskantha districts, and Dewas district in Madhya Pradesh. They are members of the banned terror organisation Jaish-e-Mohammed and were working on its behalf to set up an active terror network in Gujarat," an officer told *The Hindu*.

The accused have been booked under relevant

**The accused have been booked under relevant provisions of the UAPA, 1967, and the BNS**

provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Officials said over 250 pieces of jihadi literature were recovered from them.

The officer alleged that the accused were planning terror attacks in Gujarat and other parts of the country. They were also involved in recruiting members, propagating the organisation's extremist ideology, and creating a support network to carry out both ongoing and future plans, he said.

Investigators said that to execute terrorist acts on behalf of the Jaish in Gujarat, the group received ₹3 lakh, which they used to buy an old car. They were also instructed to arrange a safe hideout by renting a small house. Another officer said they functioned as a close-knit group and carried out activities in coordination. "Their role was to provide logistical support and shelter to operational teams," he said.

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## GS Paper III – Environment

# Radio telemetry almost saved this vulture from death

### Prince Frederick

CHENNAI

Vultures are drawn to 'the dead'. This one was drawn to the living. Captive-bred and released in the wild, this white-rumped vulture consistently displayed a tendency to be within earshot of smartphone-carrying primates. It had taken into its bald head that humans are providers of food. The idea was likely seeded in there when the bird had a brief stay at the Kalaburagi Zoological Park in Karnataka, and had been nurtured in the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve where it had the fortune, nay, misfortune of finding human feeders from time to time.

This female vulture was being spied upon. Radio-tagged, the bird had its movements tracked in real time. Records of its peregrinations at the Muduma-



A file photo of 'Z25', a white-rumped vulture that was fitted with a radio transmitter. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

lai Tiger Reserve were showing up on screens at the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS)'s establishment at Tadoba-Andhari in Maharashtra.

From radio telemetry data gathered by BNHS, it was evident the vulture was not fit for the wild, and the BNHS team was considering relocating it to a breeding centre where it could be used for breeding.

Before the conservationists could act on that decision, the vulture met with a tragic end, being electrocuted at a power transmission line in the Nilgiris in Mudumalai. If that plan had fructified, the bird would have come full circle, as it had been captive-bred at the Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre in Pinjore, Haryana, run by the Haryana Forest Department along

with BNHS.

Jonathan D'Costa, conservation biologist at BNHS, points out this bird (Z25, its radio-tagged identity) was one of five white-rumped vultures to be radio-tagged at Tadoba on December 22, 2025. The carrion-devouring quintet were released at the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve on December 30.

Mr. D'Costa gives a blow-by-blow account of how this vulture ended up among the dead prematurely: "After their release, the five white-rumped vultures were monitored. And Z25 in particular was observed to have not stuck around much in Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve. In a week or two, it flew out of the reserve and kept going south, eventually reaching Kalaburagi city in Karnataka."

Karnataka Forest Department personnel cap-

tured the bird and kept it at the Kalaburagi Zoological Park and following consultations with their counterparts in Tamil Nadu, it was decided the vulture would go to Mudumalai Tiger Reserve where a white-rumped vulture population existed. Amidst familiar plumage, Z25 had a reasonably good chance of getting acclimatised to the wild. But radio telemetry data showed the bird was slipping out of the wild; and this maverick behaviour was regularly observed on the field.

This fatal flaw in the vulture was noticed thanks to radio telemetry, and the data did help protect the bird till it ran into that power transmission line.

Radio telemetry is a potent tool to study the movements of critically endangered bird species and "herd" straying individual birds into safe zones.

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## GS Paper III – Environment

# Burning bright: tiger population quadruples at Assam's Nameri Tiger Reserve in 3 years

**Rahul Karmakar**  
GUWAHATI

The population of tigers at the 344 square km Nameri Tiger Reserve in north-central Assam's Sonitpur district has quadrupled in three years, the State's Forest and Environment Minister Jayanta Mallabaruah said on Friday.

One of four tiger reserves in Assam, Nameri shares a boundary with the 1,276.95 sq. km Pakke Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh. The other three tiger reserves are Kaziranga, Manas, and Orang, the first two being UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Mr. Mallabaruah said the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) validated the State Forest Department's 2025-end estimation of 12



One of four tiger reserves in Assam, Nameri shares a boundary with Pakke Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh. FILE PHOTO

tigers at Nameri. This was a four-fold increase from three striped cats recorded during the All India Tiger Estimation (AITE) of 2022.

He attributed the "extraordinary results" to the forest conservation efforts under the guidance of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

"From just 3 tigers in 2022 to 12 by the end of 2025, Nameri Tiger Reserve has scripted a remarkable conservation success," he said, also highlighting the return of tigers to the Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary after more than two decades.

The tiger went locally

extinct at Sonai Rupai, Nameri's satellite core, in the early 2000s. "Scientific monitoring and long-term habitat protection are strengthening tiger conservation in the Nameri-Sonai Rupai landscape," Mr. Mallabaruah said.

### Kaziranga status

Better known for its one-horned rhinos, Kaziranga has one of the highest tiger densities – 13.44 per 100 sq. km – in India.

The 2022 AITE reported that Kaziranga had 104 tigers, one more than the number recorded in the 2014 AITE. However, 148 tigers were recorded in the 'Status of Tigers in Kaziranga Tiger Reserve', a report released by State Forest Department in 2024 stated.

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## GS Paper III – Environment

### **Manufacturing justice**

#### **Use of AI-fabricated judicial 'precedents' amounts to criminal misconduct**

**B**ut for its serious implications, a judge relying on Artificial Intelligence (AI) hallucinations to arrive at a judicial determination would have been comical. Given the serious miscarriage of justice that such hallucinations can lead to, if used in the judicial processes, the Supreme Court of India has likened it to methyl isocyanate, the poisonous gas that led to the Bhopal gas tragedy in 1984 – “invisible, insidious, and catastrophic by the time anyone notices”. The Court made these observations while setting aside the orders of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) and the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) in an insolvency case after finding that the NCLT had relied on fictitious AI-generated legal citations, a lapse overlooked by the appellate tribunal. This is the latest in a series of interventions by the Court this year, cautioning against the use of AI-generated fictitious judicial precedents in court proceedings. Through its rulings and oral observations, the Court has consistently adopted a strict and cautionary approach to the deployment of AI in the justice delivery system. On February 27, the same Bench of Justices P.S. Narasimha and Alok Aradhe took cognisance of a trial court relying on AI-generated fictitious case laws and underlined that it was not merely “an error in decision-making” but amounted to judicial “misconduct”.

The Court has made clear that AI may serve as an assistive tool to improve efficiency, but it can never replace independent human reasoning, judicial discretion or professional accountability. In AI, humanity is encountering what many experts fear might well be an existential question. AI disruption is a known unknown – everyone knows that it is happening but nobody quite knows its extent or implications. There is, however, enough evidence of a combination of human stupidity and deliberate design leading to dangerous social outcomes being derived from AI. Human oversight is the essential counter to these dangers. The Court has said that presenting fabricated, machine-generated judgments to a court constitutes professional misconduct for advocates and a serious lapse of duty for judges; and any judgment influenced by an iota of fake or hallucinated AI material is “no decision in the eyes of law”. The draft ‘Regulations for Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Courts, 2026’ prohibits AI in the making of judicial outcomes such as the function of adjudication, sentencing, or deciding bail eligibility and evaluating the credibility of parties or witnesses. Even as the draft is open for public consultation, the Court has directed the Bar Council of India (BCI) to set up a dedicated committee to formulate strict norms and define disciplinary actions for lawyers who cite unverified AI material. Justice must be done and seen; not hallucinated.

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## GS Paper III – Environment

### *Building water security in a rapidly drying India*

Indian cities – from Bengaluru to Mussoorie (Uttarakhand) – are reeling under severe water stress. June saw a monsoon rainfall deficit of over 40%. Delhi is facing a severe shortage, and water supply has plummeted to about 70% of the total demand of 1,250 million gallons per day. Research by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) further finds that 11 out of 15 major river basins in India are experiencing water stress, with annual water availability below 1,700 m<sup>3</sup> per person. Several of them, including the Krishna, Cauvery, Mahi, and Tapi basins, are below the water scarcity threshold of 1,000 m<sup>3</sup> per person.

A recent report by the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) warns of global water bankruptcy. Several river basins are polluted and closed, with no outflow to the sea. Aquifers are being depleted beyond safe limits. Nearly three-quarters of the global population lives in water-insecure countries, with four billion people facing severe water scarcity for at least one month a year.

#### Water infrastructure gaps

India has an uneven distribution of water resources. With 4% of the world's water resources supporting 18% of the population, historically, the country has lived and grown with water uncertainty. While schemes such as the Jal Jeevan Mission and Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana have helped develop water supply infrastructure, concerns remain regarding the poor upkeep of existing infrastructure, inadequate wastewater treatment facilities, substantial conveyance losses, high levels of water pollution, and low cost recovery.

There are four interrelated actions that can help India navigate the 'state of bankruptcy' to become water secure.

First, invest in climate-proofing water systems



**Nitin Bassi**

Fellow at the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW)

through granular climate risk assessments of water infrastructure and services. The CEEW's analysis of India's urban flood risk management shows that such assessments help prioritise investments in high to very high-risk locations, including coastal and low-lying areas such as Thane (Maharashtra) and Navsari (Gujarat), or areas with critical infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, and electricity grids, as seen in Ahmedabad. These assessments are especially important for cash-strapped urban local bodies and panchayats. Cities should leverage existing mechanisms like the Urban Challenge Fund (UCF) to finance them—for instance, Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) recently secured ₹1,501 crore under the UCF for water supply and drainage, part of which could support water risk assessments.

Second, enable water reuse for non-potable purposes in urban areas. Shifting from a linear to a circular approach to water use is essential to reduce pressure on freshwater resources. Used water can be treated and reused for activities such as car washing, landscaping, and cooling data centres. City-level reuse planning is key to achieving this. The Thane Municipal Corporation is adopting a scientific approach to scale up treated wastewater reuse, including for construction, to reduce its annual freshwater deficit of 53 million litres per day and generate revenue. According to CEEW analysis, the economic opportunity from the sale of treated wastewater could reach ₹3 lakh crore and generate 1,00,000 additional jobs by 2047.

Third, scale up micro-irrigation systems, including drip and sprinkler technologies that deliver water to crops more efficiently than flood irrigation. Expanding these systems beyond the current 20% coverage of India's potential 72 million hectares of irrigated area requires large-scale interventions. First, the CEEW's Gujarat research shows that micro-irrigation

subsidies should be redesigned for small and marginal farmers by using 0.4 hectares instead of one hectare as the base unit. Second, farmers need support to shift to low-water, higher-value crops such as horticulture and oilseeds to recover costs, as seen in Andhra Pradesh's Rayalaseema region. Third, low-cost insurance with faster claims, including through a strengthened Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, can help smallholders manage climate and crop risks.

#### Close water data gaps

Finally, generate data at the river basin level to improve decision-making. India has good data on water availability, but limited data on withdrawals, losses, and consumption at the basin scale. This makes it difficult to assess actual water use, gauge efficiency gains, or allocate water judiciously – often leading one sector to gain at the expense of others, while the lack of data encourages "free riding", with users extracting as much as the source allows. Artificial Intelligence-based monitoring of water conveyance infrastructure can help detect and measure losses and also generate data. Cities such as Delhi and Bhubaneswar (Odisha) are installing smart bulk water meters to identify and reduce physical losses during distribution. Equally important is analysing end-user consumption by scaling up smart metering and using advanced water accounting tools. India's rollout of over 4.93 crore smart electricity meters can serve as a model for the water sector.

Water is an economic resource – it powers lives, livelihoods, and ecosystems. Reversing water bankruptcy will be the foundation of social welfare. Political will, transparent governance, and societal trust are the levers. Pull them, and India can still turn the tide toward a water-secure future.

*The views expressed are personal*

The monsoon cannot fix India's water problem: policy could



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## GS Paper III – Environment

# India will consider 'all related developments' to Teesta project, says MEA

**Kallol Bhattacharjee**

NEW DELHI

Days after Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman visited China where the two sides discussed the Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project (TRCMRP), India on Friday said its development assistance to projects in Bangladesh work on the basis of a "mutually agreed roadmap", and that India will consider "all related developments" in formulating an "overall approach" to the Teesta river-related project.

The issue came up during a press briefing when the official spokesperson of the External Affairs Ministry, Randhir Jaiswal, was asked a question on whether the Bangladesh-China decision to have a feasibility report on the TRCMRP will impact In-



**Pristine waters:** A view of the Teesta river at Sevok, some 20 km from Siliguri. AFP

dia's projects in Bangladesh. "India's development assistance for projects in Bangladesh is based on a mutually agreed road map, which is regularly reviewed. Our views on the Teesta river project have been previously conveyed to the Bangladesh side. We will factor all related developments in our overall approach to the Teesta issue," said Mr. Jaiswal.

Officials later clarified

that India's statement did not indicate any displeasure at Bangladesh's decision to go ahead with discussing the Teesta project with China as India-Bangladesh ties stand on their own merit.

The sharing of the Teesta river water has been under discussion between India and Bangladesh for decades but since 2011, the two neighbours have remained in a deadlock with regards to an agreement.



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## GS Paper III – Environment

### 'Indian firms will have to leave comfort zone to achieve \$1 tn exports'

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday reiterated his target of \$1 trillion of exports this year, but also said that Indian companies would have to push themselves out of their "cosy and comfortable" domestic market and actively work towards building their brands abroad.

#### 'Difficult, yet possible'

Speaking at the Board of Trade meeting at the Ministry of Commerce, Mr. Goyal admitted that the \$1 trillion export target would be difficult to achieve, but added that it was possible since the other countries were keen to trade with India.

"The world wants to work with us," he said. "We have to go out and capture those world markets. Wherever I go in the world, they are very keen to work with us. It's our industry that shows weakness. We are cosy and comfortable in our domestic market, but to get into the export market, we need



Piyush Goyal

scale, quality, and outreach. It will not happen by just sitting at home."

He told the gathered export promotion councils that the government's Export Promotion Mission would help them set up overseas branding, warehousing, and exhibitions if they needed.

"Please demand what you need, so your products can go to developed countries and countries with whom we have Free Trade Agreements," Mr. Goyal said.

Several trade bodies made presentations at the meeting. According to sources present during the meeting, a common demand was for greater export-related credit.