Enviro News Monitor
April 2015

Trending topics

Water Demand

- India's water crisis.
- Delhi bans use of fresh groundwater in city parks.
- Water audit in Kochi
- IISc develops alarm to save water waste

Smart Cities

- Cabinet approves proposal to set up 100 smart cities
- Gurgaon to host model grid for zero outage
- Israel to work with India on smart cities initiative
- Smart maps must for smart cities

River Pollution

- Sewage discharge
- Android app to track Ganga pollution
- Eco task force for river protection

Air Quality

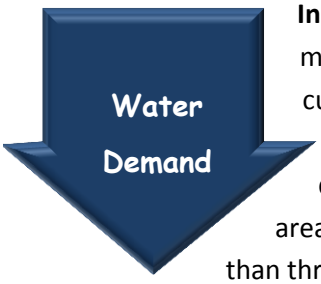
- Pune administration told to measure air quality before seeking clearance for stone quarrying
- NCR states draw up action plan to tackle air pollution
- Centre moves NGT seeking stay on ban on petrol, diesel vehicles in Delhi
- Choking India gets air quality index
- 172 building sites get notices for violating air pollution norms

Climate Change

- Impact of climate change to be examined in Sunderbans
- Climate change action plan gets Central nod
- Government to address weather woes in 100 districts

News briefs on Land Bill, Waste management norms, E-waste…

Trending topics



India's water crisis. The rapid growth of population and its growing needs has meant that per capita availability of fresh water has declined sharply from 3000 cubic metres to 1,123 cubic metres over the past 50 years. The global average is 6000 cubic metres. As water demand is expected to rise further, the future does not appear rosy. The demand supply mismatch is more severe in certain areas. In urban areas, where the demand of 135 litres per capita daily (lpcd) is more than three times the rural demand of 40 lpcd, the scarcity assumes alarming proportions.

Delhi bans use of fresh groundwater in city parks. The Delhi government has banned the use of fresh groundwater in city parks, asking land-owning and civic agencies to buy treated waste water for horticulture purposes. The move will help tide over Delhi's perennial water crisis and also monetize reclaimed water. The government will now ask the Union government's Central Ground Water Board to issue a notification to this effect. The capital has 8000-odd parks maintained by various public authorities such as the public works department and the municipal corporations. About 80 MGD (million gallons per day) of water, sufficient for one-tenth of Delhi, is used for horticulture purposes.

The draft of Delhi's first water policy says the Capital must increase its recycled wastewater use to 25% by 2017, 50% by 2022 and at least 80% by 2027.

Water audit in Kochi. The Kochi corporation will carry out a water audit in the city to determine the usage, demand and supply in its 74 divisions. The process is part of drafting a water policy for the city. The corporation's 'Water Survey 2015' will be the first step in water audit.

IISc develops alarm to save water waste. Researchers from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have developed a prototype of a monitoring system that can help identify water leaks and raise alarms. The research team made a prototype to measure inflow and outflow of water for a medium-sized campus. The test-bed was the water distribution system in a part of the IISc campus. Water supplied from water distribution authority is stored in ground level reservoirs and overhead tanks and is further distributed to the rest of the campus. Inflow of water can be measured at the point of water entry inside the campus.

Bangalore Mirror, 14 April 2015 | Hindustan Times, 25 April 2015 | Mint, 27 April 2015 | The Times of India, 1 May 2015

Cabinet approves proposal to set up 100 smart cities. The smart cities mission is aimed at "recasting the urban landscape of the country by making cities more liveable and inclusive, besides driving economic growth". The urban centres that will be developed as smart cities will be selected through a 'City Challenge' competition later this year. States will propose the names of cities, and those will be graded on parameters like creditworthiness, power supply, water, revenue generation, municipal planning and partnerships they can form. The final selection will be done through a process of elimination.

Gurgaon to host model grid for zero outage. A pilot smart grid project, envisaged as the backbone for the government's dream to build smart cities across India, was announced in Gurgaon, setting a zero power-cut target for the city within a year. The first-of-its-kind initiative will be jointly piloted by the state and central governments. The project, which will entail an overhaul of existing transmission network and upgrade of 39 substations, will be executed in two phases. The first phase, spanning sectors 1 to 57, Udyog Vihar and Manesar, aims to provide these areas uninterrupted power supply through an exclusive transmission network. The second phase will cover sectors 58 to 115.

Israel to work with India on smart cities initiative. Tel Aviv in Israel will share its smart city expertise with Maharashtra State in India. The Mayor of Tel Aviv and Chief Minister of Maharashtra have signed an agreement to provide information on citizen engagement through social media and open data; online municipal services; traffic and parking management through IT; security and emergencies; developing start-ups; green construction; and urban planning.

Spain has proposed to assist in developing Delhi as the first global and smart city in India under the framework of a draft MoU.

Smart maps must for smart cities. Smart maps can facilitate the development of India's 100 smart cities, and help the country gain upwards of $8 billion in savings and value, apart from reducing one million tonnes of carbon emissions a year, according to the report *Smart Maps for Smart Cities* released by strategy and policy consulting firm, Dalbert Global Development Advisors, in partnership with CII. According to the report, which is based on detailed analyses of nine high potential uses of maps, India is expected to see the greatest migration to cities in the next three decades. As many as 400 million people will move to urban areas.

The Hindu Business Line, 23 April 2015 | The Economic Times, 27 April 2015 | Future Gov, 28 April 2015 | Business Standard, 29 April 2015 | The Hindu, 29 April 2015 | The Economic Times, 30 April 2015

Sewage discharge. More than half the total sewage discharged into the Ganga every day comes from six big cities with Kolkata, Kanpur and Varanasi leading the pack. They are three of the total 118 towns\cities that fall in the vast basin of the country's national river. The other three cities which figure at the top are Patna, Allahabad and Moradabad. Together they present a gigantic task before the government which aims to bring these cities to a stage where each drop of sewage water they generate can be used by different agencies\sectors including industries and municipal bodies after treatment. The task, under the proposed 'zero discharge policy' of the Centre, however, looks much more difficult at a time when more than two-third of the sewage generated in these 118 towns get discharged into the Ganga untreated. A recent report, prepared by a team of experts from different government agencies, has noted that these towns\cities - spread over five states - collectively generate over 3,636 million litres per day (MLD) of sewage as against the treatment capacity of approximately 1027 MLD.

CITY-WISE SEWAGE DISCHARGED INTO THE RIVER GANGA (in million litres per day)

Cities	Sewage (MLD approx)
Kolkata	534
Kanpur	426
Varanasi	295
Patna	252
Allahabad	232
Moradabad	117

That's almost half of all sewage discharged into the river Ganga by 118 cities\towns: **3636.50** MLD

STATE-WISE SEWAGE GENERATION\DISCHARGE (Amount in MLD – approximate)

States	sewage generated
West Bengal	1,535
Uttar Pradesh	1,341
Bihar	636
Uttarakhand	111
Jharkhand	12

Number of existing STPs **55**

Amount of untreated sewage discharged into the river **2609.04** MLD

Existing capacity of these STPs **1027.46** MLD

Source. The Times of India, 29 April 2015

Replying to a question in the Rajya Sabha, the union minister for forests and climate change Mr Prakash Javadekar said that 36,874.07 million litres per day (mld) of untreated sewage is discharged into rivers. Quoting a recent survey of Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the minister said that the total sewage generation in the country is 57,233 mld as against the operational sewage treatment capacity of 20358.93 mld and non-operational of 1119.76 mld.

Android app to track Ganga pollution. Pollution in the Ganga could be tracked through an Android-based application. The National Mission for Clean Ganga will launch the new app for Android mobile phones in May. The facility is being introduced with the help of ISRO.

Eco task force for river protection. To put a check on pollution, a Ganga Task Force is being introduced in collaboration with Army. Four battalions of a composite eco task force known as Ganga Task Force will be raised for the protection of the river. The task force will be responsible for plantation of saplings in upper reaches and banks of the Ganga, strengthening of pollution monitoring mechanism on ground, watch for protection of bio-diversity, among other things.

The Times of India, 21 April 2015 | Business Standard, 23 April 2015 | The Times of India, 29 April 2015

Pune administration told to measure air quality before seeking clearance for stone quarrying. The district administration's request for more stone quarries has led the State Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) to direct them to measure the air quality at sites before seeking for a green signal. With stone crushers likely to cause more air pollution, the SEAC has particularly asked the administration to carry out the study of Ambient Air Quality (AAQ) before the next hearing in May.

NCR states draw up action plan to tackle air pollution. The Centre has joined the long battle for improving the Capital's notoriously bad air quality by getting Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan to commit to a three-month action plan to curb pollution in the National Capital Region. All four states agreed to take time-bound steps to address the problem and come out with a joint medium and long term strategy in July. Under the plan, civic agencies in Delhi and three neighbouring states will enforce the ban on burning of waste, act against polluting vehicles, set up automatic identification of overloaded vehicles at borders, phase out coal-based units and adhere to upcoming norms on handling of construction waste.

Centre moves NGT seeking stay on ban on petrol, diesel vehicles in Delhi. The Centre moved the National Green Tribunal seeking stay of its ban orders on 15-year-old petrol and 10-year-old diesel vehicles from plying in Delhi-NCR on the ground that it would affect public and essential services. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, in its plea, has said that most countries adopt fitness tests, including emission checks, of vehicle as a criterion for curbing pollution and not the age of the vehicle.

Choking India gets air quality index. India launched the national Air Quality Index (AQI), a global standard that will give details of air quality in ten cities, in what is seen as a first step in acknowledging the country's pollution woes. The data available with the Central Pollution Control Board will be compiled and displayed in public and uploaded on the internet. The ten cities — Delhi, Agra, Kanpur, Lucknow, Varanasi, Faridabad, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad — will have monitoring stations with AQI display boards presenting the data on a colour coded scale with six levels.

Other cities including Mumbai, Kolkata and Chandigarh will come under the national indexing network in a couple of months when their pollution control boards are ready with the new and updated round-the-clock monitoring stations.

From dark green indicating good air quality to a maroon conveying severe pollution, the index gives brief health implications like, minimal impact, causes breathing discomfort for sensitive people, respiratory illness from prolonged exposure, affects healthy people and severely impacts those with existing problems. The public can then know whether to stay indoors or to refrain from strenuous activity outdoors. Beijing has a similar code which advises various sections of its residents from children to elders to workers on weekdays. The index will provide current as well as daily average data on two kinds of particulate matter – PM2.5 or very fine particles smaller than 2.5 micrometres in diameter, and PM10 which are less than 10 micrometres in diameter – as well as pollutants like nitrogen dioxide, ozone and carbon monoxide.

172 building sites get notices for violating air pollution norms. The Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has issued notices to 172 construction projects in Delhi for flouting norms on air pollution. It has directed these ongoing projects to submit compliance reports and the current status of construction.
IBT Times, 7 April 2015 | The Times of India, 7 April 2015 | The Times of India, 14 April 2015 | Indian Express, 19 April 2015 | Indian Express, 24 April 2015 | The Economic Times, 27 April 2015

Impact of climate change to be examined in Sunderbans. The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) has proposed to set up long-term permanent monitoring plots in Sunderbans, a world heritage site, having maximum mangrove cover in the world to study the impacts of climate change on its flora and fauna. This is the first attempt of setting up permanent monitoring plots in a mangrove ecosystem in the country. The ZSI has set up a similar long-term permanent monitoring system in Andaman Nicobar islands along with Malvan coast in Maharashtra to study the impacts of climate change of coral reefs. The ZSI is collaborating with the Botanical Survey of India to study phenology (periodic life cycle events of plants influenced by variations of climate) of the flora of the Sunderbans.

Kerala climate change action plan gets Central nod. Kerala is all set to launch a long-term programme to develop resilience to climate change. The Ministry of Forest, Environment, and Climate Change has approved the Kerala State Action Plan on Climate Change, strengthening the hands of the State in taking up a slew of climate change mitigation and adaptation projects. The five-year package envisages a budget requirement of Rs 1170 crore for projects in eight key sectors, namely agriculture and animal husbandry, fisheries and coastal ecosystem, forest and biodiversity, water resources, health, energy, urban front, and transport and tourism

Government to address weather woes in 100 districts. Amid growing fears of the El Nino weather phenomenon occurring this year, agriculture minister Mr Radha Mohan Singh has said that the government has identified 100 districts in the country to help farmers who are grappling with extreme weather conditions such as drought and declining water table. The Indian Council for Agriculture Research has taken a national initiative on climate resilience and has identified 100 districts in the country which are facing extreme weather conditions. Resilient varieties of crops, equipment and machinery through custom hiring service are being provided to the farmers.
The Hindu, 13 April 2015 | The Hindu, 20 April 2015 | The Economic Times, 20 April 2015

News in brief

Land Bill

The land bill will be taken up in the Lok Sabha towards the end of Budget Session, which concludes on May 8, according to government sources. The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Amendment) Bill, 2015, popularly known as Land bill, was adopted by the Lok Sabha in March 2015. Some facts of interest are given below.

1	The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Amendment) Bill, 2015 seeks to Amend the Act of 2013 (LARR Act, 2013).
2	The Bill creates five special categories of land use: 1. defence, 2. rural infrastructure, 3. affordable housing, 4. industrial corridors, and 5. infrastructure projects including Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects where the central government owns the land.
3	The Bill exempts the five categories from provisions of the LARR Act, 2013 which requires the consent of 80 per cent of land owners to be obtained for private projects and that of 70 per cent of land owners for PPP projects.
4	The Bill allows exemption for projects in these five categories from requiring Social Impact Assessment be done to identify those affected and from the restrictions on the acquisition of irrigated multi-cropped land imposed by LARR Act 2013.
5	The Bill brings provisions for compensation, rehabilitation, and resettlement under other related Acts such as the National Highways Act and the Railways Act in consonance with the LARR Act.
6	The Bill changes acquisition of land for private companies mentioned in LARR Act, 2013 to acquisition for 'private entities'. A private entity could include companies, corporations and nonprofit organizations.

PRS Legislative Research | The Economic Times, 20 April 2015

Compensatory Afforestation Fund

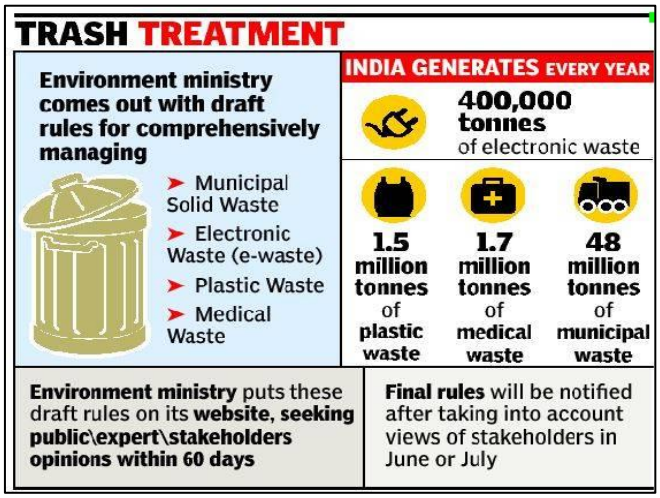
The Union Cabinet has cleared the Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAF) Bill 2015 which will pave the way for expeditious utilization of funds realized for forest land diverted to non-forest purposes in transparent manner. The C abinet gave its approval to the Bill that will also ensure utilization of accumulated unspent funds already available with Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA). The Bill provides for the following, among other things:

- ➔ Establishment of the National CAF and the State CAFs to credit amounts collected by State Governments and Union Territory administrations to compensate loss of forest land diverted for non-forest purpose.
- ➔ Constitution of a National Authority to manage and utilize amounts credited to the National CAF.
- ➔ Constitution of a State Authority in each State and Union Territory to manage and utilize the amounts credited to the State CAFs.
- ➔ Establishment of a Monitoring Group to assist the National Authority in monitoring and evaluation of activities undertaken from amounts released from the National CAF and State CAFs.

The Economic Times, 29 April 2015 | Press Information Bureau, 29 April 2015

Waste management norms

In order to implement waste management policies effectively, the environment ministry has come out with four separate draft rules for managing municipal solid waste, e-waste (computers, mobiles or other electronic/electrical gadgets), plastic waste and medical waste and sought opinion of public/experts/stakeholders within 60 days before fine-tuning and notifying those rules for implementation across the country. Draft rules have specified certain dos and don'ts for waste generators (both domestic and commercial), manufacturers, producers, consumers, collection centres, dealers, dismantlers and recyclers. Though the government currently has rules to manage such waste, the idea behind this move is to bring clarity on many issues so that urban local bodies can implement it as per existing bye-laws.



The Times of India, 10 April 2015

Merchant Ship Act

The government gave its approval for the introduction of the Merchant Shipping (Amendment) Bill, 2015, and accession to the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 of International Maritime Organization. Ships not constructed to carry ballast water, warships, naval auxiliary or other government-owned non-commercial ships will be exempted, it said. The convention requires all new ships to implement an approved ballast water and sediments management plan. All new ships will also have to carry a ballast water record book and follow ballast water management procedures to a given standard.

Business Standard, 29 April 2015

Green clearance to auction-bound mines

States have opposed a mines ministry proposal to grant conditional green clearances to mineral-bearing areas even before they are put up for auction. The proposal, made in a draft of rules prepared for the auction of iron, manganese bauxite and limestone mines, has surprised state officials and upset environmentalists. The 42-page draft also proposes that states obtain the necessary permission from land owners and those having occupation rights. The government in January brought into effect a Bill amending mining laws to introduce auction of minerals such as iron ore and bauxite. Simultaneously, it allowed mines to operate for 50 years, extended the permits for those older than 50 years for another

five or 15 years if they were captive mines, such as Tata Steel's. Among many others ideas, the ministry is suggesting that states "obtain conditional clearance on the basis of recommendations of the committee constituted for the purposes of forest clearance under the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980 and wildlife clearance under the Wild Life Protection Act 1972 or any other law" so that operations can commence.

The Economic Times, 23 April 2015

River links

The newly constituted Task Force on Inter-Linking Rivers will look afresh at all the proposed links to evaluate their feasibility, particularly in maintaining a balance between environment and development. Links that are found unfeasible will be abandoned. The , task force chairman Mr B N Navalawala said the panel would work out a “mechanism” that will bring “benefits” to the surplus States when they shared waters with deficit regions. To start with, the Ken-Betwa link between Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh would be taken up. That would be followed by the Daman Ganga-Pinjar Par-Tapi-Narmada links between Maharashtra and Gujarat. For the remaining links, efforts would have to be made to win over Kerala, Odisha and Karnataka who were opposed to the programme.

The Hindu, 22 April 2015

E-waste

India is the fifth biggest producer of e-waste in the world, discarding 1.7 million tonnes (MT) of electronic and electrical equipment in 2014, a UN report has said warning that the volume of global e-waste is likely to rise sharply by 21% in next three years. According to the *Global E-Waste Monitor 2014*, compiled by United Nations University (UNU), at 32%, the US and China produced the most e-waste overall in 2014. India came in fifth, behind the US, China, Japan and Germany, the report said. Most e-waste in the world in 2014 was generated in Asia at 16 MT or 3.7 kg per inhabitant. The top three Asian nations with the highest e-waste generation in absolute quantities are China (6.0 MT), Japan (2.2 MT) and India (1.7 MT).

Total e-waste generated in 2014

- 12.8 MT of small equipment (such as vacuum cleaners, microwaves, toasters, electric shavers and video cameras)
- 11.8 MT of large equipment (including washing machines, clothes dryers, dishwashers, electric stoves, and photovoltaic panels)
- 7.0 MT of temperature-exchange (cooling and freezing equipment)
- 6.3 MT of screens
- 3.0 MT of small ICT equipment
- 1.0 MT of lamps

The Times of India, 20 April 2015