



Enviro News Monitor

February 2015

Trending topics

Air Pollution



- Delhi most polluted among 16 NCR cities
- Study finds high level of toxic benzene in Delhi air
- Air pollution cutting 660 million lives short by 3 years
- NGT directs DPCC to act against Wazirpur steel units

Economic Survey



- Survey lauds India's green measures, calls for more
- India's carbon tax already much above global expectations

Climate Change



- Assam tea planters plan green drive to fight climate change
- Karnataka to breed climate change-resistant millets

News briefs on Natural resources, Green buildings...



Delhi most polluted among 16 NCR cities. India's top pollution monitoring body, the Central Pollution Control Board, has said in a report that Delhi has the most polluted air among 16 cities in the National Capital Region. However, all cities in the NCR exceed the national permissible standards for the crucial pollutant, particulate matter, according to the CPCB. Delhi has the dubious distinction of topping the charts with the highest levels of nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, benzene and carbon monoxide. As far as particulate matter (PM) or tiny particles of various sizes suspended in air are concerned, the CPCB measured the levels of PM10 and PM2.5.

Study finds high level of toxic benzene in Delhi air. For Delhiites, there's more bad news in the air. The capital not only has the worst air quality among big cities across the world, a new study has found alarmingly high levels of a carcinogenic compound, benzene, in Delhi's air. A 68-day study of monitoring stations in NCR by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), whose results were submitted to the National Green Tribunal (NGT), found the average benzene level in Delhi to be 14 micrograms per cubic metre, almost three times higher than the safe limit of 5.

Air pollution cutting 660 million lives short by 3 years. Mounting evidence that India's poor air quality is cutting short lives is increasing pressure on the government to speed up corrective measures. The latest pointer to the magnitude of the problem is a study by environmental economists from University of Chicago, Harvard, and Yale. In many parts of the country, including 77% of urban areas, the pollution levels exceed national standards. This is cutting short the lives of 660 million Indians by a little more than three years, the report adds. The study uses data to show that non-compliance to national and international standards is both an urban and a rural phenomenon, more marked in north India, blowing the myth that the problem is restricted to urban areas. The study focuses on particulate matter (referred to in air pollution parlance as PM and these are of varying sizes), which affect cardiovascular and respiratory systems and have been consistently found to be dangerous to human health.

The report says that 99.5% of the Indian population breathes air that has pollutants way above the levels considered to be safe by the World Health Organisation.

NGT directs DPCC to act against Wazirpur steel units. With 2017 set as the deadline for cleaning and rejuvenating the Yamuna, the National Green Tribunal has now directed that the steel pickling units in Wazirpur, which are a major source of pollution, be acted against for operating in violation of anti-pollution standards.

[The Economic Times](#), 3 February 2015 | [The Hindu](#), 3 February 2015 | [The Economic Times](#), 23 February 2015 | [The Economic Times](#), 26 February 2015 | [The Economic Times](#), 27 February 2015 | [The Times of India](#), 28 February 2015



largest emitter of greenhouse gases, created a National Clean Energy Fund in Budget 2010-11, with contribution from the clean energy cess on coal mined in India or imported. It's among the few countries in the world to have introduced a carbon tax.

India's carbon tax already much above global expectations. The Economic Survey advocates India, which imposes a higher carbon tax on most of fossil fuels, could do more in the case of coal. It has played a line, not often taken by the government before - the high that the excise duty on petrol and diesel is an implicit carbon tax, India imposes on its consumption of fuels that cause greenhouse gas emissions leading to global warming.

[Mint](#), 28 February 2015 | [Business Standard](#), 28 February 2015

Survey lauds India's green measures, calls for more. India should raise levies on greenhouse gas-emitting coal to strengthen its position at international climate change negotiations, the Economic Survey recommended. Unlike other nations, India has taken significant steps to eliminate oil subsidies and gone beyond to impose taxes on petroleum products, taking it from a carbon subsidization regime to one of carbon taxation, the annual survey said. India, the world's third

"To bring domestic prices on par with the international prices would require an increase of cess to US\$ 9 per ton or Rs.498 (a fivefold increase). Coal price reform of this kind could potentially contribute to annual CO2 (carbon dioxide) emissions reduction of 214 million tons which is 11% of India's annual emissions, or half the entire emissions of Indonesia in 2012 compared to the baseline," the survey said.



Assam tea planters plan green drive to fight climate change. In order to cope with the increasing impact of climate change, tea planters in Assam have decided to increase the green belt cover in tea estates and create more water bodies on vacant lands within tea estates. The problem of climate change vis-à-vis tea output came up for discussion during a seminar organized by the 'Assam International Trade and Industrial Fair 2015' at Jorhat recently. The tea industry in Assam has been facing erratic and unfavorable climate conditions for almost a decade now. To address the issue of climate change, the association has taken the lead to enter into a consultation with eminent scientists in order to make the planting community aware of the weather-changing patterns as also equip them to combat the uncertainties in times ahead.

Karnataka to breed climate change-resistant millets. The Karnataka government will soon launch a consortium to breed improved millets that can withstand prolonged heat and cold conditions, in its ongoing effort to increase productivity of highly nutritious crops. Minister of State for Agriculture, Mr

Krishna Byre Gowda, said the government would shortly sign an agreement with ICRISAT and the Bengaluru-based National Centre for Biological Sciences to embark on this ambitious project.

[Deccan Herald](#), 25 February 2015 | [The Tribune](#), 23 February 2015

News briefs

Natural resources

31 major minerals to be notified as minor minerals

The government has decided to notify 31 major minerals as minor ones, Mines Minister Mr Narendra Singh Tomar has said. State governments are allowed to make rules to regulate the grant of quarry leases, mining leases or other mineral concessions in respect of minor minerals. “These 31 minerals account for 55 per cent of the total number of leases and nearly 60 per cent of the total leased area,” stated the ministry. The minister said to strengthen the mineral inventory database, the government was planning to notify public sector undertakings for prospecting. According to the recently promulgated Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Ordinance, the government can grant non-exclusive reconnaissance permits for any mineral.

[Business Standard](#), 6 February 2015

Karnataka lake conservation bill gets House nod

The Legislative Assembly passed the Karnataka Lake Conservation and Development Authority Bill-2014 which provides for protecting lakes and removing lake encroachment in urban areas. The bill provided for exercising regulatory control over all lakes within the jurisdiction of 11 municipal corporations in the State, including the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP). Once the legislation comes into effect, the Karnataka Lake Conservation and Development Authority headed by the chief secretary will be set up and it will have powers, among others, to identify, recover encroached lakebed and take steps to protect, conserve and restore water bodies in the State. The bill also has penal provisions. Any person found to be guilty of encroachment of lakebed is liable for imprisonment for a term not less than three years which may be extended to five years.

[Deccan Herald](#), 10 February 2015

Andhra Pradesh: Panel to Protect Forests, Wildlife Formed

The state government has constituted a state-level committee for protection of forests and wildlife headed by chief secretary. The state government intends to increase the green cover in the state to 33 per cent from the present 25 per cent. Orders to this effect were issued by the government. The

committee will meet once in three months to discuss problems of forests and wildlife. It will ensure coordination among forest, police, tribal welfare and revenue departments.

The New Indian Express, 15 February 2015

Green buildings

Green building concept gains ground in Bengaluru

Bengaluru has touched a record 250 million sqft of green space within buildings (green buildings), primarily in new apartment complexes that have been growing at around 20 to 25 per cent annually over the last five years. North, East and South Bengaluru are the main areas where the green building concept is growing in the City.

Deccan Herald, 8 February 2015

Government charts plan to manage green spaces in smart cities

The environment ministry has drawn up a “comprehensive plan” for the management of urban green spaces in the 100 smart cities Prime Minister wants to create in India. The move is significant because the ministry of environment and forests (MoEF) has been receiving flak from environmentalists and activists for clearing industrial projects, while allegedly doing little to protect the environment. The environment ministry’s plan specifically looks at the problem of sacrificing the green cover in urban areas to make way for development works such as road widening and building parking spaces and flyovers. The environment ministry is also considering green solutions such as offering incentives to the public for involvement in urban greening projects and encouraging corporate entities to take up greening as part of their corporate social responsibility programmes.

Mint, 2 February 2015

Compiled by the Library and Information Centre, TERI

