

Enviro News Monitor

January 2015

Trending topics

Ganga River Pollution



- Waste from 40,000 km of drains choking Ganga
- Kanpur's 700 tanneries major source of pollution in Ganga
- German government commits 3 million euros for Ganga rejuvenation
- Sewage plants along Ganga planned

Smart Cities



- 3 US-India teams to draft plan for 3 smart cities
- Germany to partner India in developing 3 smart cities
- Framework for 100 smart cities to be ready soon
- Work to begin on 20-30 smart cities this year
- Infosys to develop Mysore campus as Smart City

Air Quality



- Air pollution in cities
- NGT issues notice over rise in air pollution
- NGT asks four central ministries to reduce vehicular pollution in metros
- Stricter pollution norms across north India by April

Mining Ordinance



- Centre promulgates mining ordinance
- Government to send officers to prod states on the ordinance
- Mineral exploration to attract global firms

News briefs on Climate change, Natural resources, Pollution, Waste management...

Trending topics



- **Waste from 40,000km of drains choking Ganga.** More than 40,00km long drains and subsidiaries stretched over 5,000km carrying industrial and urban waste of dangerous level while directly falling into the 1,300km long stretch of the Ganga are choking the holy river and stalling all efforts to rejuvenate it. Among the rivers merging into the Ganga, Ram Ganga, Kali Nadi Poorva, Kali Nadi Pashchim, Hindon, Gomti, Sai and Yamuna have a very high level of biological oxygen demand (the amount of dissolved oxygen needed by

biological organisms in a water body to break down organic material).

- **Kanpur's 700 tanneries major source of pollution in Ganga.** The National Green Tribunal has warned of complete closure of 700 tanneries located on the banks of river Ganga at Kanpur, terming them as one of the "highest sources of pollution". The tribunal also observed that if effective steps to curb the pollution level was not taken then the tanneries would be closed as "life of millions cannot be put at stake." The bench demanded to know the capacity of the existing effluent treatment plants (ETPs) and the sewage treatment plants (STPs) and how much untreated waste was being discharged into the Ganga. Details were also sought for the quantity of effluent being generated by the tanneries, and the average duration of power available to the existing STP and the common ETP, and whether there were any alternate arrangement in case of power cuts.

Ganga will be totally cleaned by 2018, the Centre told the Supreme Court, which had sought to know whether the government was serious about completing the clean-up exercise during its current tenure..

- **German government commits 3 million euros for Ganga rejuvenation.** The German government has committed three million euros amounting to nearly Rs 21 crore for rejuvenation of river Ganga and an appraisal by the government to formulate concrete projects for initial assistance is expected in March.

- **Sewage plants along Ganga planned.** The Centre has proposed the setting up and maintenance of Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) in all the 118 cities and towns located along the Ganga in a time-bound manner to check pollution of the river. To be built and maintained through a special purpose vehicle, these STPs will be paid for by the Centre and help plug the gaps in the system and prevent untreated effluents from flowing into the Ganga. The SPV will ensure that demand-supply gap in respect of sewerage treatment in urban areas will be met in line with timeframe for cleaning of the river.

[The Times of India](#), 4 January 2015 | [Indian Express](#), 15 January 2015 | | [NDTV](#), 20 January 2015 | [Business Standard](#), 20 January 2015 | [The Economic Times](#), 28 January 2015 | [The Hindu](#), 29 January 2015



■ **3 US-India teams to draft plan for 3 smart cities.** Fast-tracking the plan to develop three major cities as 'smart cities', United States Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) and urban development ministry on Tuesday agreed to set up three task forces to prepare a detailed action plan in the next three months. Each city task force will discuss city specific features, project requirements and appropriate revenue models for enabling flow of investments etc., before suggesting action plans for development.

USTDA and three state governments of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh have signed memorandum of understandings (MoUs) to develop Allahabad, Ajmer and Visakhapatnam as smart cities. The road map will be worked out in three months to develop these cities as Smart City. A three-member US team that landed in the city to prepare a report on how Allahabad would be developed as smart city under an Indo-US initiative, said the Sangam City would soon witness active participation of global giants like IBM, CISCO, GE, UTC, etc, in providing consultation for its development. Moreover, after gauging the potential of Allahabad, these companies would also consider large-scale investments.

■ **Germany to partner India in developing 3 smart cities.** Germany has agreed to partner with India in developing three smart cities and a six-member joint committee has been set up in this regard to evolve the way forward including identification of those cities in three months. This was decided at a meeting between Urban Development Minister M Venkaiah Naidu and the German Minister of Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety Ms Barbara Hendricks.

■ **Framework for 100 smart cities to be ready soon.** The framework for Prime Minister's ambitious project of developing 100 smart cities will be finalized by February-end, Union Urban Development Secretary Mr Shankar Aggarwal said. The government's vision is to develop cities with technology-based governance that will enable efficient public services and have 24x7 water and power supply, 100 per cent sewerage, drainage and solid waste management facilities, besides top class infrastructure.

■ **Work to begin on 20-30 smart cities this year.** The government plans to take up 20-30 cities during the next financial year under its flagship scheme to develop smart cities. According to report, there would be some minimum pre-qualification for the cities to make it to the elite club. To start with, the government is looking at creating a colony or commercial area as small as 50 acres within a city limit with smart features in five years that can be replicated in other parts in successive years.

CHECKLIST FOR IDEAL TOWNSHIPS

➤ Action taken & progress made towards Swachh Bharat	➤ Number of daily workers/ employees coming to cities
➤ Initiatives taken towards good governance	➤ Status of the municipal cadre in state
➤ Implementation of model bye-laws proposed by Centre	➤ Details of roof-top solar installations
➤ City's main economic activity, how can it create more employment	➤ Details of waste-to-energy initiatives undertaken/ completed

■ **Infosys to develop Mysore campus as Smart City.** Infosys has announced its plans to invest and develop its Mysore campus as a 'Smart City'. The company will also provide its expertise in the areas of smart infrastructure planning and sustainable building technology to the Ministry of Urban Development. Infosys has been using industry leading practices such as radiant cooling, day lighting and effective retrofit strategies to reduce its energy consumption. The company has also invested in a Command Center at its headquarters in Bangalore from where it monitors, manages and optimizes resource usage across its development centers based in India. This Command Center analyzes data of energy consumption, building operations, and uses advanced algorithms for energy saving, predictive maintenance and more, to ensure operational excellence.

In December 2014, Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) and Microsoft India had announced their partnership to transform Surat into a smart city.

[The Economic Times](#), 14 January 2015 | [The Economic Times](#), 27 January 2015 | [The Times of India](#), 28 January 2015 | [The Economic Times](#), 29 January 2015 | [The Times of India](#), 30 January 2015 | [The Financial Express](#), 30 January 2015 | [The Times of India](#), 30 January 2015



Air pollution in cities. The quality of air has gone down drastically in Delhi this year. The level of pollution has touched the highest level in January when compared to the data of same period in last three years. In January this year, the level of pollution is 20 per cent more than last three years. Thick blanket of fog has further worsened the pollution level in the national capital. Dr Gufran Beig from the state-run System of Air Quality Weather Forecasting and Research said that earlier in January, the average of 2.5 particulate matter (pm) in air used to hover around 200 to 300 microgram per cubic meter but this time the figure has crossed the 370 mark in the same unit.

In Pune, the persistent chill has led to the highest-ever pollution levels being registered by the System of Air Quality Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) scientists. While the air quality generally deteriorates in winter, particulate matter pollution reached alarming levels in December-January. This year, Pune witnessed the most polluted winter with air quality, in terms of particulate pollution, found to be consistently poor.

■ **NGT issues notice over rise in air pollution.** The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has sent notices to Agra and seven other cities over the sharp surge in air pollution levels due to increase in number of privately-owned petrol and diesel-run vehicles. Concerned over the unbridled rise in air pollution levels in the city, the environmental protection agency has also sought recommendations from the administrations of Uttar Pradesh and other states to counter rising private ownership of multiple vehicles and ways to tackle pollution-causing vehicles. Similar notices have been issued to New Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai, Bangalore, Allahabad, Hyderabad and Agra through the chief secretaries of their respective states.

■ **NGT asks four central ministries to reduce vehicular pollution in metros.** The National Green Tribunal's principal bench has asked four ministries of the central government to find ways to reduce air

pollution in the country's metro cities to limit its health impact on women and especially children. The interim order, passed by NGT chairperson Mr Swatanter Kumar, was passed while hearing of a petition filed by Dr Sanjay Kulshreshtha on increase in vehicular pollution and its adverse health impacts.

■ **Stricter pollution norms across north India by April.** A new roadmap has been prescribed for the introduction of higher emission standards with the Centre proposing to implement the Euro IV norms across all north Indian states by April 2015. At present the Euro IV norms are applicable in 13 major cities including Delhi and the NCR. By 1 April 2015 all private cars in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Rajasthan would have to be Euro IV compliant. In an affidavit filed before the Supreme Court, the ministry of environment and forest referred to a communication by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas stating Euro IV emission norms would be extended to the entire country by 1 April 2017. Within a year of northern states adopting Euro IV, the same shall be made mandatory in Goa, Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, Odisha, Daman & Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Parts of Maharashtra and Gujarat would also be covered by 1 April 2016 and by April 2017, Euro IV would be made mandatory in the entire country.

[Hindustan Times](#), 6 January 2015 | [The Economic Times](#), 8 January 2015 | [India TV News](#), 10 January 2015 | [DNA](#), 24 January 2015 | [The Times of India](#), 27 January 2015



■ **Centre promulgates mining ordinance.** The Union government has promulgated the [Mining & Mineral Development Regulatory \(MMDR\) Amendment Ordinance, 2015](#). With this, certain key provisions of the MMDR Act of 1957 stand changed, even without an Act of Parliament. Second and subsequent renewals had also been affected by court judgments. As a result, the sector's output has come down drastically, leading to import of minerals by users. State governments, however, can award leases to state-owned companies without going through the auctioning process in the areas reserved for these. Such government firms can enter into a joint venture with other entities, provided it retains more than 74 per cent in the venture and the private partner is selected through bidding.

Under the new law, state governments would grant mineral concessions through auctions. "This should also mean the government will get an increased share from the sector," went the statement. In notified minerals – bauxite, iron ore, limestone and manganese ore - the normal process will be direct auction of the mining lease (ML). When mineralisation has not been established and prospecting is required, the auction of a prospecting lease (PL)-cum-ML can be done with prior approval of the central government. In the case of non-notified minerals, a PL-cum-ML would be auctioned. Where mineralisation is established, a direct ML would be given through auction. The amendments to the MMDR Act include auctioning of the mineral concessions. Also renewals have been done away with and the concession period has been increased to 50 years from the current 30 years. At the end of the concession period, the mining lease will be put up for auction again.

■ **Government to send officers to prod states on the ordinance.** The Central government may dispatch joint secretary-level officers to various states to help in effective implementation of the Mining

Ordinance promulgated earlier this month. The move is being billed crucial to take states like Orissa on board for ensuring smooth passage of the ordinance in the coming Budget session of Parliament. Several states are against the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, amendment ordinance, promulgated on January 12, which nullifies their powers to auction lapsed mining leases.

■ **Mineral exploration to attract global firms.** With the government opening up the mineral exploration sector, global mining engineering, technology and services (METS) companies are likely to be interested in India. According to the ordinance, non-exclusive reconnaissance permits will be granted to companies interested in exploration, according to the terms and conditions of the Centre.

View the [Mines and Minerals \(Development and Regulation\) Amendment Ordinance, 2015](#)

[The Hindu Business Line](#), 13 January 2015 | [Business Standard](#), 14 January 2015 | [Indian Express](#), 14 January 2015 | [Indian Express](#), 23 January 2015 | [Business Standard](#), 26 January 2015

News briefs

Climate Change

DMRC comes under UN plan

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has been registered as the world's first transport sector project under the Programme of Activities (PoA) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), enabling it to quantify climate change benefit from all Metro operations in India. The move will also facilitate the fast-tracking of Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) registration of all the upcoming rail-based projects in the country which will entitle them to carbon credits for the extent of reduction in emissions, which could be traded in the international carbon market for money. A recent study by the Central Road Research Institute (CRRRI) claimed that Delhi Metro has helped keep more than 3.9 lakh vehicles off roads in 2014, thus saving Rs 10,364 crore in terms of less fuel consumption and other benefits.

[The Tribune](#), 5 January 2015

Natural resources

100 new water treatment plants to feed ATMs

A total of 100 water treatment plants will be set up to feed kiosks or ATMs in North and North-West Delhi. This would benefit about 5 lakh people living in unauthorised colonies, JJ clusters and villages. The RO water dispensing units will be set up by Tata Power Delhi Distribution Ltd (TPDDL), which signed a memorandum of understanding with the Delhi Jal Board regarding the project on Tuesday. Each plant will cater to about five to 10 ATMs in its vicinity. The corporate social responsibility initiative will be the third project in the water utility's plan to expand water ATM facilities.

[The Hindu](#), 7 January 2015

Government panel nod to link Damanganga, Wagh and Pinjal

A special committee on the interlinking of rivers, headed by Union water resources minister, has approved a Rs 14,500 crore project to connect the Damanganga, Wagh and Pinjal rivers. Under the project, excess water from Damanganga will be diverted to Pinjal and will be used to cater to the increasing needs of Mumbai. After the completion of the project, 23 TMC (thousand million cu. m) of water is expected to become available which will be enough to take care of Mumbai's needs up to 2050. Mumbai's current demand for water is 3350 million litres per day and is expected to rise to 4200 mld by 2020. The project involves constructing three dams and two tunnels. The first dam will be built at Bhugad in Peth tehsil of Nashik district on the Damanganga, the second on the Wagh river in Palghar district's Jawhar tehsil at Khargi Hill, and the third on Pinjal on the border of Jawhar and Mokhada tehsils of Plaghar district.

Mint, 12 January 2015

49 per cent forest cover vanished from Andhra Pradesh in 8 decades

Forests in Andhra Pradesh do not present a pleasant picture. Most forests in the state are rapidly degrading and becoming more and more fragmented with every passing decade. Forest fragmentation means breaking up of a large intact forest into small patches. The overall forest cover is also shrinking by almost 49 per cent in a time span of eight decades. A study by scientists of National Remote Sensing Centre, Hyderabad, revealed that the forest cover in Andhra Pradesh declined from 85,392 sq. km to 43,523 sq. km between 1930 and 2011. The study said that the landscape analysis shows that the number of forest patches was 3981 in 1930; 5553 in 1960; 8760 in 1975; 9412 in 1985; 9646 in 1995 and 10,597 in 2011. This indicates the ongoing anthropogenic pressure on the forests. The mean patch size (in sq. km) of forest decreased from 21.5 in 1930 to 12.3 in 1960 and dropped to 3.9 by 2011.

Deccan Chronicle, 12 January 2015

Waste management

Only Chennai, Mumbai have system for biomedical waste management, finds study

Chennai and Mumbai are the only big Indian cities with an effective system to manage biomedical waste, whereas Delhi and other north Indian state capitals have a poor record, a study has found. The survey by the International Clinical Epidemiology Network (INCLIN), published in the Indian Journal of Medical Research, covered 400 hospitals, both government and private, in 20 states. It found that around 82% of primary, 60% of secondary and 54% of tertiary health care facilities have no credible biomedical waste management system in place.

The Times of India, 19 January 2015

Smart waste management system at GIFT city

One important aspect of a Smart City is systems that are sustainable and environment friendly. Gujarat International Finance Tec City (GIFT) is inching towards that end. A smart solid waste management system is being put in place using Swiss technology at GIFT City where garbage will be disposed of with minimum human interference. Not only that, the waste will be recycled to make organic manure and generate power that will be consumed in GIFT City itself. The solid waste from the towers will be sent to the waste collection centre, about 2 km away from buildings, using vacuum suction pipes. The waste will be transported at the speed of 110-140 km per hour through a network of underground pipes. The speed and direction of the waste will be controlled by a fully computerized console.

[The Times of India](#), 20 January 2015

General environment

Government removes arbitrary environmental clearance to facilitate projects

The NDA government has done away with an arbitrary environmental clearance mandated by the UPA for building large factories that industry captains had red-flagged with the Prime Minister's Office as a major deterrent for new investment projects. In a notification issued late last month, the environment ministry has exempted the building of large industrial sheds, schools, colleges and hostels of up to 150,000 square metres from seeking a prior green nod for construction.

[The Economic Times](#), 6 January 2015

Shimla to have more no-construction zones

More than 240 hectares of forest area, both government and private, falling in the Tara Devi and Totu area is likely to be declared as a green zone where no construction activity would be allowed. This will enhance the green cover of the town. The Town and Country Planning Department has identified more than 240 hectares falling in the Parav forest near Tara Devi and Gadyog in Totu to be declared as the green zone. These two areas have a thick green cover. A proposal to declare these areas as no-construction zones has been sent to the government. There are 17 no-construction green belts in the town spread over an area of 414 hectares. The government proposes to raise the number of green belts in and around the town to over 100 so the forests in the green areas remain protected.

[The Tribune](#), 11 January 2015

Tata Steel goes green, to plant 50K saplings in steel city in 3 years

In its effort to increase and maintain the green cover of Jamshedpur, Tata Steel has decided to plant more trees in 2015. Preserving and improving on the green cover of the steel city by planting trees several times is the green mantra of the company. According to reports, the green cover in Jamshedpur is 26.8 per cent of total area and already more than 10,000 saplings have been planted in 2014. The company has decided to plant 50,000 trees for next three years. For every sacrificed tree, 10 trees are being planned to be planted back once the roads are ready. Taking steps in this direction, Jusco, a 100

per cent subsidiary of Tata Steel, along with Tinplate Company of India Limited (TCIL) took up the tree plantation drive in the eastern part of the township.

The Pioneer, 11 January 2015

US to spend \$2 million a year on Clean India

In a bid to boost the “Clean India” drive in urban areas, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) will provide help in technology transfer, technical support, sharing of best sanitation practices and implementation and monitoring. USAID is likely to spend about \$2 million per year on these activities. The activities are aimed at effective knowledge transfer and sharing of best practices for water and sanitation, and enabling faster delivery of services for 500 cities and towns. Under this, USAID will assist in creating a profile consumer behaviour and identify behaviour changes relating to purchase of toilets and related services, besides developing targeted and creative messaging for behaviour changes to increase demand for toilets and supply of sanitation products and services.

Deccan Herald, 14 January 2015

PM seeks progress report on Swachh Bharat

The Prime Minister has sought details on what various ministries have accomplished under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. The Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) has asked all government ministries and departments to submit an action report on the scheme as well as plans for the year ahead. The PMO has also called for milestones that the ministries have planned for the scheme till 2 October 2015. The Swachh Bharat Kosh, that was set up by the finance ministry under the department of expenditure, has registered over Rs 200 crore worth contributions. The Kosh or fund was set up to take in contributions for building of toilets under the scheme. As an added incentive to companies, contributions to the fund are included as activities for corporate social responsibility.

Indian Express, 30 January 2015