



Enviro News Monitor November 2014

Compiled by the Library and Information Centre, TERI

Trending topics

Corporate Social Responsibility



- India's best companies for CSR 2014
- Indian corporates awake to importance of CSR
- Corporates to pump in Rs 14,000 crore towards CSR in 2014-15
- Dentsu and United Nations Population Fund partner for CSR advisory unit

Biomass Burning



- Biomass burning a major source of pollution in India
- Delhi air quality deteriorates
- National Green Tribunal calls for stricter measures

Air Quality



- Report warns of spiralling air pollution; outlines roadmap to curb emissions
- Vehicular pollution in Delhi causing congenital diseases
- No pollution certificate, no petrol
- National Green Tribunal steps in to address Delhi's worsening air quality
- SC suggests higher parking fee, cess on cars to cut pollution

Green Panel



- Green panel suggests reducing the role of inspectors to ease development
- Dense forests should be out of bounds for industry
- Role of the National Green Tribunal

Water Bodies



- Lakes will constitute just 0.74 per cent of Bengaluru by 2020, says study
- By 2020, city will be a full-fledged concrete jungle

IPCC Fifth Assessment Report



- Act now or face 'irreversible' effects of climate change: IPCC report
- India needs to revisit action plan on climate change
- Mumbai, Kolkata vulnerable to climate change

Heatwaves



- Indians can expect 10 times more heatwaves by turn of century

News briefs on Biodiversity, Climate change, Natural resources, Pollution, Regulation...

Trending topics



1.02 per cent. Further, 19 companies spend between 1 per cent and 2 per cent of their PAT. The remaining rest 55 companies have a CSR spend of less than 1 per cent of their PAT. To illustrate progress versus expectations, company performance results have been categorized across four quadrants — pace setters, smart utilisers, starting out and low efficiency.

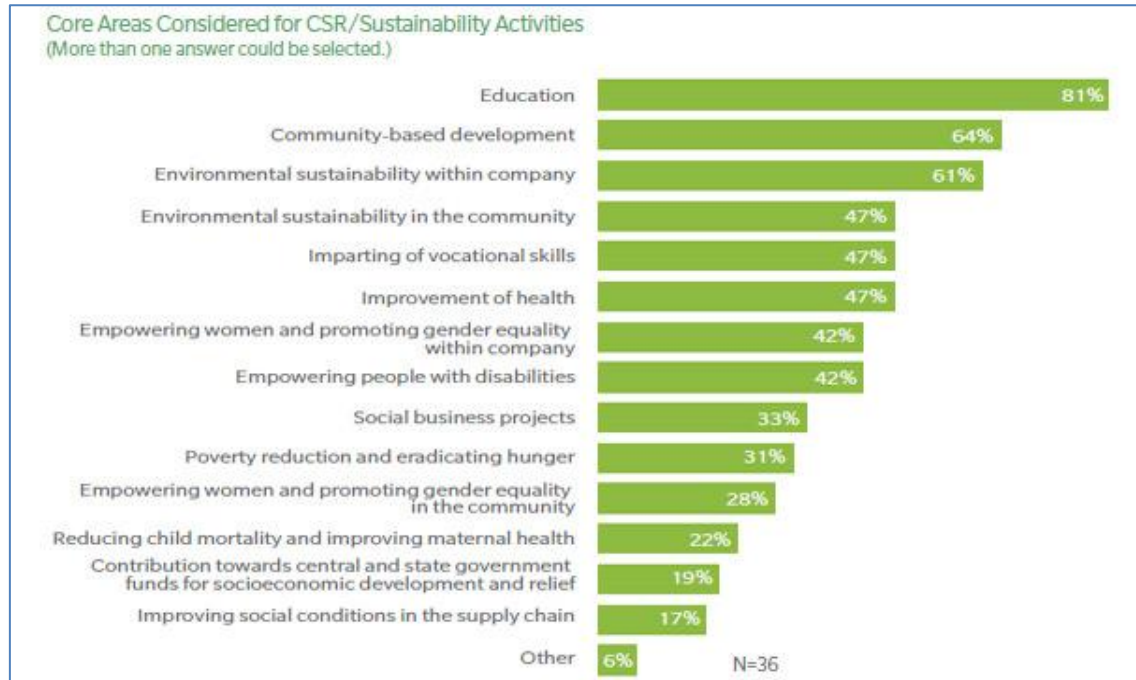
➔ **India's best companies for CSR 2014.** The *ET Futurescape-IIM Udaipur CSR survey 2014* present strong evidence that the journey towards business transformation has begun for many of India's top companies. Current CSR spend of 74 companies out of Top 115 companies is Rs 2521 crore annually. According to the survey, most corporates do not meet the proposed 2 per cent CSR norm -- the average CSR spend as a percentage of PAT for 74 companies is

Only 13.5 per cent of the companies studied currently comply with the 2 per cent norm.

List of companies with the best programmes for CSR

1. Tata Steel: The company uses Human Development Index to keep track of CSR in villages
2. Tata Chemicals: The company spends Rs 12 crore on CSR every year; wildlife conservation tops priority
3. Mahindra Group: CSR is a mix of strategic philanthropy, shared values & sustainability
4. Maruti Suzuki: Community development and road safety propel Maruti's CSR in the fast lane
5. Tata Motors: The company drives CSR through healthcare and education
6. Siemens
7. Larsen & Toubro
8. Coca-Cola India
9. Steel Authority of India
10. Infosys

➔ **Indian corporates awake to importance of CSR.** A survey conducted by HR consulting firm Mercer titled *Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability Programs, Policies and Practices Survey*, reveals 75% of Indian firms feel that CSR has become more important at their company over the past two years and that 81% believe it is an extremely important component for business strategy. Education emerged as the most favoured area, followed by community-based development and environment sustainability for CSR spend by companies surveyed by global consultancy major, Mercer, which is part of Marsh & McLennan Companies in India consisting of Marsh, Mercer and Oliver Wyman. Releasing the findings, the survey said 81 per cent of companies said their CSR spend was on activities concerning education, 64 per cent on community development and 61 per cent on environment sustainability.



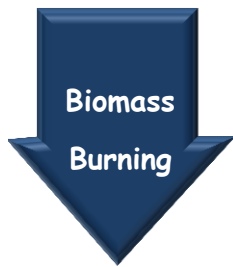
Source. Business World. November 2014

The survey brought to the fore that 73 per cent of participating companies in India have a CSR policy in place. Of the companies that stated that they are undertaking CSR activities without a policy or guidelines (17 per cent), all of them plan to develop a formal policy within the next two years. While ten per cent of respondents indicated that their company does not undertake CSR activities.

➔ **Corporates to pump in Rs 14,000 crore towards CSR in 2014-15.** Finance Minister Mr Arun Jaitley said that companies are expected to pump in as much as Rs 14,000 crore for corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities in 2014-15 and the amount will be increasing in subsequent years. Under the new Companies Act, companies with a net worth of more than Rs 500 crore or revenue of over Rs 1000 crore or a net profit of more than Rs 5 crore need to spend at least 2% of the average net profit of the preceding three years on CSR activities.

➔ **Dentsu and United Nations Population Fund partner for CSR advisory unit.** Dentsu India has tied up with the United Nations Population Fund India to launch a corporate social responsibility advisory and services division that will help companies plan and implement effective CSR programmes. The new unit will be part of Citizen Dentsu, the advertising agency's social communication division. It will help develop annual reports for companies.

[Business Standard, The Economic Times, 5 November 2014 | The Economic Times, 11 November 2014 | Business World, 13 November 2014 | The Hindu Business Line, Sharing Value Asia, 14 November 2014 | The Economic Times, - 28 November 2014]



→ **Biomass burning a major source of pollution in India.** Vehicles, air conditioners and industries may be the usual suspects contributing to the rise in pollution levels across the country, but the practice of biomass burning is an equal threat, if not bigger. A recent study assessing the effects of biomass burning on pollution in South Asia was conducted by Pune-based Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology and National Centre for Atmospheric Research in the US. The study reveals that burning of agricultural produce leftovers and forests during the major

harvesting period (between March and May) contributes up to 60% release of toxic gases such as carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide in the eastern region, including Myanmar, 50% in central India, 25% in the Indo-Gangetic region and 40% over the Bay of Bengal. These gases are a precursor to another harmful gas, ozone (O₃), which was found to be adversely affecting the country's crops and contributing to global warming.

The study, [Influence of springtime biomass burning in South Asia on regional ozone: A model based case study](#), provides model-based estimates of springtime biomass burning impact in South Asia. It adds that the activity significantly affects the regional ozone distribution by increasing it considerably, particularly in the eastern region, Central India and the Indo-Gangetic belt. The health effects and climate perturbations from biomass burning have been revealed in a recent [Stanford study](#) that noted over 200,000 premature deaths from the pollution, besides a significant contribution to global warming.

→ **Delhi air quality deteriorates.** The air quality in the national has deteriorated significantly and experts identified burning of agricultural wastes in neighbouring states as one of the major contributors to a visible haze over the city. The Air Quality Index value, calculated on the basis of PM 2.5 level, touched a high of 293 recently which implies that the air quality is very unhealthy. System of Air Quality Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), an air quality monitor in the capital, too has linked the peaking of PM 2.5 to burning of agriculture waste in the bordering states of Punjab and Haryana.

As per official data, the air quality in the city has slipped into the category of "poor" following rapid increase of PM 2.5 (respirable particles) level.

→ **NGT calls for stricter measures.** The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has asked the Centre to take concrete steps to check burning of crop residues that result in choking smog spells, aggravating the already high pollution levels in Delhi. The tribunal asked the Ministry of Environment and Forests to issue directions under the Environment Protection Act, 1986 as "mere advisories are not going to help." India produces 500 million tonnes of crop residues annually. Uttar Pradesh tops the chart with 60 MT followed by Punjab (51 MT) — both are Delhi's neighbours. Uttar Pradesh burns up to 13 MT of crop residues.

[[Business Standard](#), 6 November 2014 | [The Times of India](#), 10 November 2014 | [International Business Times](#), 10 November 2014 | [Hindustan Times](#), 11 November 2014]



→ **Report warns of spiralling air pollution; outlines roadmap to curb emissions.**

If current trends of vehicle population, fuel and emission standards persist, PM 2.5 emissions will increase by a factor of three, and those of NO_x will increase by a factor of five, warns a new report by TERI, University of California, San Diego and the California Air Resources Board. The new report titled *Options to reduce road transport pollution in India* establishes the scientific basis for reducing emissions, the technologies available, and

governance issues that need to be urgently addressed to improve air quality in Indian cities. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that of the 67 risk factors studied in their [Global Burden of Disease](#) project, outdoor air pollution was ranked fifth in mortality and seventh in health burden in India, contributing to over 627,000 deaths and 17.7 million healthy years of life lost in 2010.

The transport sector contributes about 15-50% of PM 2.5 emissions in cities, and is a dominant contributor to NO_x emissions.

→ **Vehicular pollution in Delhi causing congenital diseases.** Increasing vehicular pollution in Delhi is leading to congenital and acquired diseases in foetuses, newborns and children, said Dr Sanjay Kulshrestha, a senior consultant paediatric. He made a presentation before the National Green Tribunal, highlighting how high level of vehicular pollution is causing increased incidences of birth defects in foetuses and newborns and various other problems in children as well as the vulnerable section of population like senior citizens and traffic policemen.

→ **No pollution certificate, no petrol.** From December vehicle owners not having pollution certificates would not be able to buy fuel from the petrol pumps in Delhi. A decision to this effect was taken in a meeting chaired by Delhi Chief Secretary, which was attended by the senior officials from the Transport and Environment department, besides the Delhi Traffic police.

→ **National Green Tribunal steps in to address Delhi's worsening air quality.** An NGT bench headed by Chairperson Justice Swatanter Kumar put out a 14 point action plan that essentially puts the authorities on notice and asks them to step up to their task of ensuring that the Capital is better managed and more livable for its residents. The comprehensive order, which reiterates issues that have been raised separately, is the judiciary's attempt to jolt the administration into taking action. The tribunal has banned vehicles over 15 years old from plying on Delhi's roads and the burning of leaves and other material in the open. A ban on 15-year-old commercial vehicles is already part of the Delhi government's regulations.

→ **SC suggests higher parking fee, cess on cars to cut pollution.** The Supreme Court has impelled the Centre to act urgently on "second generation reforms" and consider charging extra cess on privately-owned diesel vehicles and higher parking charges, among various other measures, to curb pollution in Delhi. The court urged the Ministry of Environment and Forest to also consider advancing Euro IV and implement measures such as restricting use of private transport through additional charges, limiting use of diesel, augmenting public transport system and making commercial vehicles not destined for Delhi bypass the city.

[[The Times of India](#), 12 November 2014 | [The Hindu](#), 13 November 2014 | [The Tribune](#), 13 November 2014 | [The Times of India](#), 27 November 2014 | [The Times of India](#), 28 November 2014 | [Indian Express](#), 29 November 2014]



→ **Green panel suggests reducing the role of inspectors to ease development.**

The high-level committee formed to review green laws has recommended the reduction of the role of inspectors in approving plans and monitoring air and water pollution. The panel formed in August, gave its recommendation report to Environment Minister, and said it had suggested measures to preserve the environment but at the same time make development much easier. The panel, headed by former Cabinet secretary T S R Subramanian, also proposed setting up a national laboratory for air water quality within the environment ministry and instituting an All India Environment Service. The new service is proposed to have a dedicated pool of officers to man central and state pollution control boards and related monitoring and investigating bodies across the country.

→ **Dense forests should be out of bounds for industry.** No industrial or mining activity should be allowed in forests with more than 70 per cent tree cover and in designated protected areas like national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, an expert committee that was set up to review environmental laws has recommended in its report. The committee has suggested that if some infrastructural or development work indeed needs to be permitted in these areas, it should be allowed only after an authorisation from Union Cabinet. Forests with more than 70 per cent tree cover are classified as 'very dense forests' and comprise about 12 per cent of the entire designated forest area in the country, according to the 2013 edition of the India State of Forest Report. Subramanian committee's proposal, if accepted, would, for the first time, create 'No-Go' areas for all sorts of industrial or development projects.

→ **Role of the National Green Tribunal.** The recommendations take away the role of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) which under the proposed ELMA, will only be able to judicially review the decision of Appellate Boards. The Special Environment Courts shall dispose of cases expeditiously and normally within six months. Aggrieved parties may approach an appellate board presided over by a retired high court judge.

WHAT THE PANEL RECOMMENDS

- New umbrella law to subsume existing environment laws, the powers of pollution control boards
- National and state-level authority to appraise and monitor projects
- Fast-track clearance for power, mining and linear projects
- Self-certification of compliance by projects and random review
- Larger and more projects to be appraised at the state level
- Amendment to Forest Rights Act to dilute consent powers
- Administrative tribunal instead of judicial National Green Tribunal to review clearances on appeal
- District-level courts to decide on infringement of green laws
- Limited no-go forest areas where mining is banned
- Definition of 'forests' to be formulated to reduce litigation
- New environment service as part of All India Services cadre
- Companies to pay more for compensatory afforestation but not be involved beyond financing
- Proposes Environment Laws (Management) Act (ELMA) that prescribes new offences, as also for establishing special environment courts presided over by a session's judge and higher penalties.

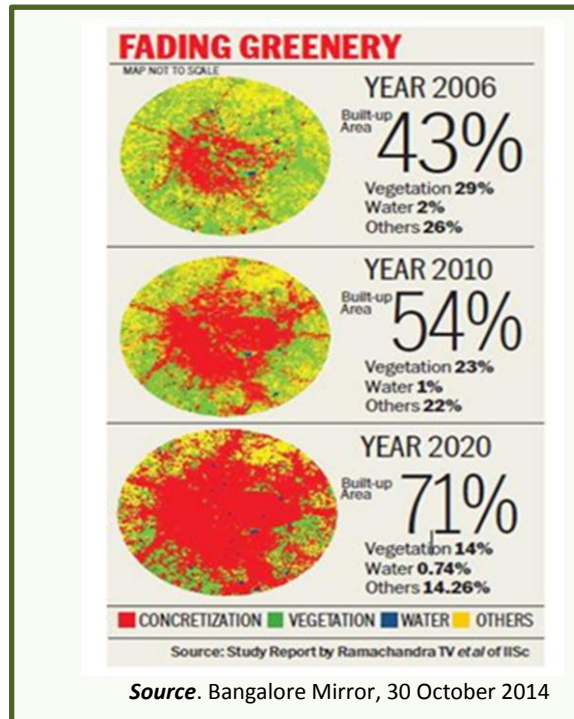
[The Times of India, 18 November 2014 | Business Standard, 19 November 2014 | Indian Express, 21 November 2014 | The Hindu, 30 November 2014]



→ **Lakes will constitute just 0.74 per cent of Bengaluru by 2020, says study**

By the end of this decade, Bengaluru's dwindling water bodies could shrink to half their original number and expanse, says a new study by the Centre for Ecological Sciences at the

Indian Institute of Science. By 2020, lakes will constitute just 0.74 per cent of the city, which is around half their 1972 status when they made up 3.4 per cent of the geographical area. As many as 265 lakes dotted the city in 1972. By 2010, the number had come down to 93, although Bengaluru's area went up five-fold, encompassing many more lakes. Today, lakes constitute 0.9 per cent of Bengaluru's area. The study, titled *Ecological Insights to Mitigate Urban Flood Risks*, warns of a possible increase in the



Source. Bangalore Mirror, 30 October 2014

frequency and intensity of urban floods as lakes and their catchment are concretized.

➔ **By 2020, city will be a full-fledged concrete jungle.** According to the study, Bangalore's vegetation in six years will not only come down to a single digit but even the percentage of its water bodies will plummet to as low as 0.7 to 0.5 ushering in an ecological disaster. By the end of the decade, the Bengaluru's total built-up area will increase from the present 48 per cent to 70.64 per cent. This dramatic decline in the city's water bodies is anticipated even though researchers added a projected 10-km buffer to the city's present radius, including several more lakes. According to the study, Bangalore's vegetation in six years will not only come down to a single digit but even the percentage of its water bodies will plummet to as low as 0.7 to 0.5 ushering in an ecological disaster.

[[Bangalore Mirror](#), 30 October 2014 | [The Hindu](#), 5 November 2014]



➔ **Act now or face 'irreversible' effects of climate change: IPCC report**

Humanity will face immense difficulty in coping with the climate change after a point. But options are available to adapt to climate change and implement stringent mitigation activities so that the impact is within manageable range. Beyond certain point it will be difficult for human society to cope with climate change. If we delay the mitigation activities, then they will become more expensive and not implementable, Dr R K Pachauri, chairperson,

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), told the Indian media ahead of the release of the synthesis report of the [IPCC Fifth Assessment Report](#) at Copenhagen. Speaking about the report, Dr Pachauri said it gives the scientific proof that human actions have an impact on the climate and steps have to be taken to start the mitigation and adaptation activities. He said the report brings out the compelling science behind climate change.

➔ **India needs to revisit action plan on climate change.** India will be vulnerable to impacts of climate change and so must take a whole range of measures to help local institutions handle this impact, Chairman of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Dr R K Pachauri, said. This would apply as much to agriculture as it does to extreme events, which cause enormous losses in life and property, Dr Pachauri said in a conference call from Copenhagen, where the Synthesis Report, the concluding instalment of the Fifth Assessment Report, was released. Stating that India has a National Action Plan on Climate Change, the IPCC Chair, who is also the Director-General of TERI, said that it will need to be revisited in the light of the findings of the report. Dr Pachauri said it was also important for India to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, and to consider that very seriously because there are benefits of energy security, improvements of local environmental conditions, possibly higher levels of employment, that would accrue from pursuing a path if efficient in use of energy and realize as much as possible on low carbon intensity fuels that can be used in India.

➔ **Mumbai, Kolkata vulnerable to climate change.** India's populous coastal cities Mumbai and Kolkata are most vulnerable to loss of life and properties due to coastal flooding in the second half of the century, the government has quoted the IPCC report ahead of the global climate conference in Peruvian

capital Lima. The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned against extreme weather events like occurrence of heatwave, heavy precipitation, droughts, floods, cyclones and wildfire that cause damage to ecosystems and human systems in various regions, Environment Minister Mr Prakash Javadekar said.

Also read: [For India, it is important to remember that mitigation measures intersect with other societal goals, creating the possibility of co-benefits or adverse side effects, says Dr R K Pachauri, Director-General, TERI.](#)

[[Zee News](#), 2 November 2014 | [The Statesman](#), 3 November 2014 | [Indian Express](#), 22 November 2014 | [The Financial Express](#), 30 November 2014]



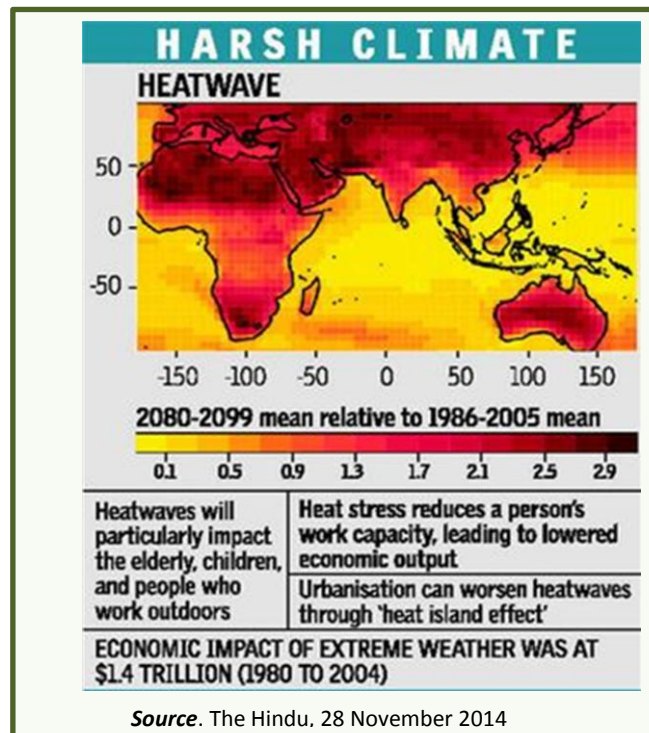
➔ **Indians can expect 10 times more heatwaves by turn of century.**

By the turn of the century, Indians could experience 10 times the number of heatwaves in their lifetime than they do now, according to a new report released by the Royal Society, the United Kingdom's national science academy, [Resilience to extreme weather](#). By 2090, global warming would have increased the frequency of heatwaves, which are defined as a spell of more than five consecutive days where the summer mean temperature is 5°C higher than the

historic value for the area.

Due to the combined effect of climate and demographic (increasing population) changes, the country will experience more calamities in the years to come, says a global report on Resilience to extreme weather events. The number of floods is likely to double and occurrences of heat waves are expected to see a ten-fold increase. Countries in the southern part of North America and Central Africa and areas in Western Europe and several island nations of Asia-Pacific will also be exposed to extreme weather conditions, the report says. It calls for action at all levels of government — international, national and local — to make society more resilient.

[[The Hindu](#), [The Times of India](#), 28 November 2014]



News briefs

Biodiversity

India's 10 famous bird habitats in serious danger, says study

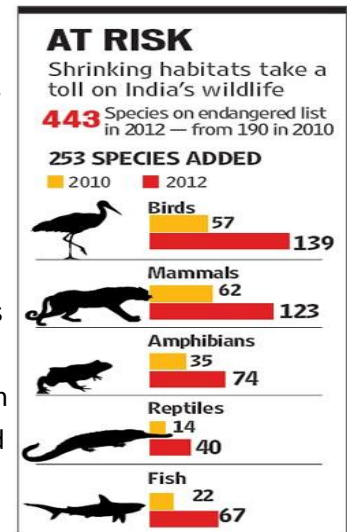
Unsustainable developmental policies and rising insensitivity towards nature have put "in serious danger" at least 10 of the country's famous bird habitats including Gujarat's Flamingo City, a new study titled *IBAs in Danger* by Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and its global partner BirdLife International. The recent findings clearly show that at least 10 Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) — as they are called globally — are in serious danger of being lost forever. BNHS studies and monitoring across the country have shown that the IBAs including Kutch's famous Flamingo City, Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary in Solapur-Ahmednagar of Maharashtra and Sewri-Mahul Creek in Mumbai are among the most threatened habitats in the country. The other bird habitats which are in grave danger of losing tree cover include Sailana Kharmor Sanctuary in Ratlam, Madhya Pradesh; Tillangchong in Andaman-Nicobar; Dihaila Jheel and Karera Wildlife Sanctuary in Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh; Basai in Gurgaon, Haryana; Sardarpur Florican Sanctuary in Dhar, Madhya Pradesh and Ranebennur in Haveri, Karnataka. Some of the major reasons behind the loss of biodiversity and habitat in these and other areas are destruction or disturbance due to infrastructure development, wrong anti-people conservation policies, indiscriminate livestock grazing beyond traditional pastoral lands, industrial and sewage pollution, indiscriminate agricultural expansion including use of pesticides, rapid urbanization and poaching.

[[The Times of India](#), 16 November 2014 | [The Times of India](#), 18 November 2014]

India's wildlife at risk, endangered species list doubles in 2 years

Rapid decrease in suitable habitat across India has resulted in the addition of 253 new species of wildlife in the endangered list in just two years. The number of endangered species in 2010 was 190, which jumped sharply to 443 in 2012, according to the latest data by the Zoological Survey of India. The startling information became public through a Comptroller and Auditor General's report tabled in the Parliament. Birds are hardest hit with 139 species on the list in 2012 – up from 57 in 2010. The number of mammals on the endangered list has gone up from 62 in 2010 to 123 in 2012 and includes the Snow Leopard, Hangul Kashmir Stag and the Pygmy Hog. Rapid water contamination has taken a toll on the fishes too with 45 new species added to the list for a total of 67 endangered species in 2012. 39 new species of Amphibians have been added to the list – up from 35 species in 2010 to 74 in 2012.

[[Hindustan Times](#), 30 November 2014]



Source: Zoological Survey of India

Climate change

Inter-university consortium embarks on glacier studies

The Hindu, 6 November 2014

For the first time, an Inter-University Consortium on Cryosphere and Climate Change (IUCCCC) is undertaking glacier studies in four states in India, funded by the Department of Science and Technology. In November 2012 vice chancellors of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), University of Jammu, University of Kashmir and Sikkim University took the initiative and got the project going. DST has supported the five-year study with Rs 18 crore. The study is using state of the art equipment and technology to study glaciers. For the first time, the Universities engaged in the research have access to this type of equipment and another major component of the study is computing the chronology of glaciers. Isotopic studies of ice will be conducted by the University of Kashmir and radio carbon dating by Jammu. In addition the study will have optical dating of sediments to find out their age up to half a million years. The study involves glaciers in Kashmir, Karakoram, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Uttarakhand. JNU is studying two glaciers each in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. In Jammu and Kashmir seven glaciers will be studied apart from two in Sikkim.

[The Hindu, 7 November 2014]

PM's climate change council recast

The Union government reconstituted the Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change to coordinate the National Action Plan for Assessment, Adaptation and Mitigation of Climate Change. The 18-member council retains Dr R K Pachauri, Chairperson of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change; Mr Chandrashekhar Dasgupta, Distinguished Fellow, TERI; and Mr Nitin Desai, economist. Mr Raj Chengappa and Mr R Ramachandran, journalists; Ms Sunita Narain, Director-General of the Centre for Science and Environment; Mr Ratan Tata, industrialist; and the former Environment Secretary Dr Prodipto Ghosh have been dropped. It has re-nominated Dr Ajay Mathur, head of the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, and included the Union Ministers for Coal and Power and Urban Development.

[The Hindu, The Times of India, 6 November 2014]

Researchers to study impact of climate change on farmers

A study on impact of climate change on farmers has been initiated in Manimutharu irrigation area of Tirunelveli district. The study will focus on how farmers are coping with irregular monsoon, frequent droughts and floods - some of the impacts of climate change. The 18-month study, funded by the South Asian Network for Development and Environmental Economics (SANDEE) will be carried out by researchers from Bangalore-based Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) and Azim Premji University. The study area has been fixed as Manimutharu irrigation area depending on Manimutharu dam for water to cultivate. In the last three to four years water has not been released in the 80ft channel while it was released in the 40ft channel regularly. Hence, a situation arose wherein one set of villages received water while the remaining experienced a drought-like situation. Since there is no adequate rainfall in the region for water to flow in both channels, researchers are using this as an

opportunity to understand how farmers are coping with water shortage on these two parameters arising in same area.

[[The Times of India](#), 14 November 2014]

IITM works on climate model for IPCC meet

The earth system model (ESM), a long-term climate model at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), has been authenticated by the American Meteorological Society and accepted in bulletins and IITM experts are looking forward to the next Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to present simulations based on the ESM model, which would be a first from India at IPCC. This will be a change from seasonal prediction to a long-term climate model covering all parameters — the model assesses data of nearly 100 years. The thrust being on Indian monsoon, the focus of building the ESM is mainly detection, attribution and projection of changes in the South Asian monsoon.

[[Indian Express](#), 15 November 2014]

Puducherry: 7 missions form part of climate change plan

In the years to come, Puducherry is expected to be warmer, experience a large degree of rainfall variability and have extreme weather events which would affect sectors such as agriculture and tourism, says the concept note of Puducherry's State Action Plan on Climate Change. It also quotes a study by Anna University which analyzed data from 1972 to 2010 and found coastal erosion of 4.2 per cent of the total Puducherry coast. Now, Puducherry's State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) has been endorsed by the National Steering Committee on Climate Change of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change. Under the SAPCC, seven missions deemed relevant to the UT were picked. These include the Solar Mission, the Enhanced Energy Efficiency Mission, the Sustainable Habitat Mission, Green Puducherry and Sustainable Agriculture Mission, Water Mission, Strategic Knowledge Mission, and Coastal and Disaster Management Mission.

[[The Hindu](#), 18 November 2014]

Natural resources

Water ATMs come to Bengaluru city

A network of innovative water ATMs is all set to make a splash in Bengaluru. With significant groundwater depletion and contamination over the years, these ATMs could bring respite to citizens reeling under water scarcity. Known locally as water ATMs, the dispensers use pre-paid smart cards, allowing people to fill containers up to 20 litres for Rs 5 only. Similar units have proved to be a big success in Bangalore Rural, which is perennially plagued by water shortage. As a first step, around 10 new ATMs are likely to come up in the city's periphery under Mahadevapura constituency that boasts of big-ticket IT industries.

[[The Times of India](#), 8 November 2014]

Karnataka government revives plan to rejuvenate Arkavathi à la Thames, Sabarmati

The State government has revived its long-pending project to rejuvenate Arkavathi river on the lines of River Thames in Central London and Sabarmati River Valley in Gujarat. Cauvery Neeravari Nigam Limited (CNNL), the nodal agency for the project, has invited global expression of interest-cum- prequalification of consultants for the project that includes desilting the river bed and its two reservoirs (one at Hesaraghatta and another at Thippagondanahalli), beautification of the river valley, restoring ground water table and developing places of tourist attraction along the riverfront. The once pristine river, which was a source of drinking water for Bengaluru, is under serious threat. Rampant encroachments have changed the very course of the river that originates in Nandi Hills of Chikkaballapur district and flows through Bengaluru Rural and Ramanagara districts.

[[Deccan Herald](#), 21 November 2014]

Safe drinking water for all by March 2017

The Government has set March 2017 deadline to provide safe drinking water in country's 17,995 habitations where rural people are being forced to consume contaminated water — laced with fluoride, arsenic and heavy toxic metals — causing major health problems. To achieve this, the Union Ministry of Water and Sanitation has outlined a two-pronged strategy entailing installation of community water purification plants or through piped water supply from alternate safe drinking water sources in the affected States within next three years.

[[The Pioneer](#), 25 November 2014]

Pollution

Air pollution biggest threat to agriculture, says study

Air pollution poses the biggest threat to India's agriculture production as it could lead to a decline of more than 30 per cent in grain yields in many northern states. The research paper [Recent Climate and Air Pollution Impacts on Indian Agriculture](#) that analyzed yields of wheat and rice crops for 30 years, found that air pollution caused wheat yields in densely populated states to be 50 per cent lower than 2010. Uttar Pradesh is not only India's most populous state, but it is also the largest producer of both wheat and rice in the country, providing over one-third of India's wheat and 14 per cent of India's rice. This is the first research to demonstrate how air pollution contributes more on the crop loss than the climate change consequences. The findings have implications for global food security as India is a major rice exporter. The statistical model suggests that, averaged over India, yields in 2010 were up to 36% lower for wheat than they otherwise would have been, absent climate and pollutant emissions trends, with some densely populated States experiencing 50% relative yield losses, observed Dr Jennifer Burney of the University of California at San Diego in the US and Prof. V Ramanathan of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, also in San Diego, in the study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

[[The Hindu](#), 4 November 2014 | [Deccan Herald](#), 4 November 2014 | [The Pioneer](#), 5 November 2014]

WHO sets guidelines to reduce indoor pollution deaths

The World Health Organisation (WHO) announced its first-ever guidelines for indoor air pollution related to cooking, heating and lighting, a problem estimated to kill more than four million people per year. Burning fuels such as unprocessed coal or kerosene indoors is the primary cause of such pollution, with poorer countries especially hard hit due to a lack of affordable alternatives, it said. The new [WHO guidelines for indoor air quality: household fuel combustion](#) stress the need to improve access to cleaner home energy sources such as liquefied petroleum gas, biogas, natural gas and ethanol, or electricity, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

[[WHO Media Centre](#), 12 November 2014 | [The Strait Times](#), 13 November 2014]

General environment

Environment ministry launches GIS based online support mechanism

Aimed at bringing transparency and reduce delays in regulatory clearances, the Environment ministry has launched the Geographical Information System (GIS) based online support mechanism to help in taking "informed" decisions. The system will also help officials in getting relevant information with just a click of the mouse as it will have the satellite imagery and details about the forest cover. Projects and other activities being carried out in the forests could be monitored. The first phase that was launched contains geo-referenced layers of forest cover as per the latest State of Forest Report by Forest Survey of India, forest types, biological richness, landscape integrity, protected areas, tiger reserves and corridors.

[[The Economic Times](#), 11 November 2014]

Panel to prepare final draft of CEIA study on Chenab basin by 2015

Even as tribals in the snow-bound Lahaul-Spiti and Pangri subdivision of Chamba rejected the construction of big hydropower projects in the Chenab basin on the ground that these would wreak havoc in the eco-fragile valley, the Directorate of Energy (DOE) yesterday claimed that "public consultative meetings with stakeholders were successful and the draft policy for the Chenab basin would be submitted to the government in 2015 for final approval". The tribals, under various anti-power projects sangharsh samiti, said that they had rejected big power projects and registered their view before the state panel at Udaipur, Keylong and Pangri for the draft of the Cumulative Environment Impact Assessment (CEIA).

[[The Tribune](#), 10 November 2014]

CRZ norms violation: Cases filed against 16 Puri hotels

The administration has filed criminal cases against the violators of Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) norms following a direction by the National Green Tribunal. District Magistrate, through the Government Pleader, filed 18 criminal cases against 16 hotels and two apartment owners for violation of CRZ norms in the Court of Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate, Puri, Priya Ranjan Barik. If convicted, the law prescribes five years of imprisonment and a fine of Rs one lakh. The hotels booked under the EP Act are Sterling Holiday Resorts, Hotel Chariot, Hotel International, Golden Palace, Mayfair, Bijay International,

Samudra, Holiday Resorts, Pink House, Beach Hut, Safari International, Akash, Allahabad Bank holiday home, and apartments Gitanjali and Sri Ram.

[[The Pioneer](#), 19 November 2014]

Western Ghats influences Karnataka rain: IISc study

Two researches have attributed the monsoon rainfall magnitude in Karnataka and Maharashtra to the topography of the Western Ghats, which they claim is responsible for bringing showers to the two states as compared to others in the region. The research study [Investigation of orographic features influencing spatial distribution of rainfall over the Western Ghats of India using satellite data](#) claims that the mountainous barriers of the Ghats are one of the major contributing factors to heavy rainfall, which occurs mostly during June and July, and that weather department predictions are off the mark as this is not taken into account. Using rainfall data for the last 14 years, the duo from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, and Indian Institute of Remote Sensing, Dehradun, found three heavy rainfall spots in Maharashtra and two in Karnataka, but found no such spots in Kerala or Tamil Nadu.

[[Deccan Herald](#), 15 November 2014]

Environment regulator to be set up without penal powers

The Union government has agreed to set up an environment regulator that will have powers to appraise industrial projects. But it will not have powers to penalise violators of green laws. This development follows inter-ministerial and inter-state consultations over the months after a Supreme Court order to set up an autonomous body for appraising projects and authorising the body to penalise offenders. The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change had inter-ministerial consultations and consultations with states for setting up of a regulator/authority under Section 3(3) of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, said Union Environment Minister Mr Prakash Javadekar in a written reply in the Lok Sabha.

THE MANDATES OF THE NEW REGULATOR

- The regulator will have powers to appraise industrial projects for environment clearance
- It would oversee the process of accreditation of environment impact assessment (EIA)
- It would ensure enforcement of the conditions stated in the environment clearances
- The announcement is in contrast to the recommendations of the high-level committee constituted by the Union environment ministry under former Cabinet Secretary TSR Subramanian to review environment laws
- The committee had suggested an independent National Environment Management Authority and State Environment Management Authority to take the powers of the existing pollution control boards

[[Business Standard](#), 28 November 2014]